SRI JNANADEVA'S
AMRITANUBHAVA
BY
CHANGADEVA PASASHTI

AMRITANUBHAVA

Ambrosial Experience

समत्वं योग उच्यते

SAMATA BOOKS
MADRAS



Sri Jnanadeva's

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with

CHĀNGADEVA PĀSASHTI

Translated from Marathi by

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Introduction

'The world of words which can talk about us has yet to come into existence' (*Amritanubhava*, VIII.5). Thus said Jnānadeva because it is very difficult for words to convey appropriately the state of liberation. In that state when the individual merges into the absolute then 'of what use is the legion of words?' (V.62). As soon as the words issue forth before their meanings follow in their wake, they disappear like the picture of a fish drawn on the water surface (X.17); inspite of the handicaps, Jnānadeva ventured to describe his own ambrosial experience of the Supreme Reality, for he derived unique pleasure in doing so (X.13). Secondly, he felt that giving vent to his experience in words would serve as a good remembrancer to self and posterity (V.67). Through his work he thought of clearing the debt of speech (i.e. energy creating sound waves) by reaching the people and enlightning them. While doing so however, he does not take any credit to self. He attributes his success in the composition of this work to the grace of his preceptor Shri Nivrittināthа (X.7).

In his clarification of the work in Chapter X Jnānadeva explains that he was prompted by the illustrious examples of the sun, the moon, the ocean, the sky and the spring which when endowed with certain beneficial qualities freely allowed others to enjoy their beneficences. So he wanted to share his joy of liberation with the entire humanity and hence this composition. He enjoyed reliving this experience while narrating (X.13).

About the *raison d'être* for undertaking this work, the poet Mahipati narrates the following incident in his *Bhaktavijaya*:

> 'In order that the wise, God-loving and pious men might have the true knowledge, Nivritti said lovingly to Jnānadeva: "From your own experience on the subject compose Amritānubhava"; replying that he would do so, Jnānadeva placed his head at the feet of his 'Sadguru'. Then giving thought to his own spiritual experiences he composed *Amritānubhava*. In order to destroy the pride of Brahmadeva, Krishna created cows and calves; likewise, Jnānadeva composed Amritānu-

bhava as a fitting reply to the proud heretics who talked vainly out of their own imagination.

Jnānadeva has himself expressed that he has offered very delicious dishes in the form of *Amritānubhava* with an open invitation to all and sundry to join in the celebration of the great festival of the world; the rich varieties of the dishes prepared from nectar do whet the appetites even of those who are peacefully abiding in the state of liberation. For a layman, however, it demands a special taste for it to enjoy; otherwise the worldly gourmands will be miserably disappointed.

As the title of the work indicates, *Amritānubhava* narrates the ambrosial experience of the final state of liberation (*amṛtakala*) which any individual can attain in the present life, provided he undergoes rigorously the spiritual practices. From the five verses of the last chapter it appears that the author has preference for 'Anubhavāmrita' as a title and many manuscripts mention only this title. The combination of the two words—Amrita and Anubhava, when juxtaposed alternately gives following meanings—experience of immortality; ambrosial experience; well proven recipe (like any tested medicine) for immortality; experience of nectar; experience as (tasty and invigorating as) nectar. All these aptly suit this work. Even though the original title 'Anubhavāmrita' is suggested by the text, *Amritānubhava* has gained currency just because, as some one has rightly surmised, the latter has the phonetical ease of expression. As Jnānadeva expresses, 'the word has a remembrance-value' (VI.1), so the latter title which is easier to pronounce and remember than the former has come into vogue.

All Jnānadeva's compositions are poetic in form, and consist of *Bhāvārthadipikā*, *Amritānubhava*, *Chāngadeva Pāsashti* and *Abhangagāthā*, all composed before he was twenty-one; because he was a prodigy of learning or an incarnation of Lord Vishnu he could produce such a luminous literature on such tough subjects very useful to the entire humanity. His magnum opus *Bhāvārthadipikā* is a Marāthi commentary on the Sanskrit *Bhagavadgitā* and explains in a lucid manner the philosophy of Lord Krishna which could be understood by a layman. It had the effect of not only making the philosophy understood by the people but also making them practise it in their life and enjoy the bliss.

Amritānubhava follows *Bhāvārthadipikā*. It is a faithful narration of the experience of self-realisation which he claims to be otherwise

self-evident; it puts in a nut-shell the philosophy of the Siddhā's—the Nātha Sāmpraday, the Sivādvaita as well as the essence of the Upanishads.

न विरोधो न चोत्पत्ति र्न बद्धो न च साधकः।
न मुमुक्षु र्न वै मुक्त इत्येषा पर मार्थता ॥

'From the point of deeper understanding there is no contradiction, no creation, no bondage, no student of spirituality, no one desirous of liberation; all are free only'.

Jnānadeva opines that the Upanishads don't take anyone further than *Amritānubhava* (X.18). He further asserts that by taking this rich nectar people will gain liberation (X.19).

'Chāngadeva Pāsashti' a composition of sixty-five (Pasashti) verses, is a fitting reply to a blank letter sent by the great Siddha Chāngadeva who lived more than fourteen hundred years, explaining how both of them are one and the same appearance of the Supreme.

The *Abhangagāthās* contain primarily devotional songs dealing with such topics as devotional love, importance of chanting God's name, the praise of Pandhari, Vitthal etc. They have captured the hearts of the illiterate people of Mahārashtra. One has to see to believe it how lakhs of people, singing devotional songs and completely merged in their ecstasy go on a pilgrimage from Ālandi to Pandharpur in a very orderly manner during the months of June–July every year. Ācharya Vinobāji has found a special science of yoga described in these *abhangās*.

Amritānubhava is a very mystic composition and a very difficult one to understand. First, it deals with a subject which is beyond comprehension. Secondly it was written some seven hundred years ago in a language not very familiar to the present generation; besides it demands certain knowledge of basic concepts of Sivādvaita, Siddha philosophy and Vedānta. The text is full of illustrations and similes which though simple in tenor need close study to appreciate their significance with reference to the context. As Jnānadeva himself has cautioned, 'one has to delve deep into the words' (X.28) to enjoy the taste of the nectar. The germane philosophical thought-currents which have gone into the making of *Amritānubhava* are therefore briefly highlighted.

All philosophies are adventures in the exploration of the unknown having the macro and micro aspects of the universe as the topics of

enquiry. The investigation is with regard to the creation of the universe and man and how to get rid of the miseries and sorrows of human beings and enjoy happiness. This covers all spectrums of objects as well as matters which are incomprehensible by available instruments of human laboratory. 'The words fail to describe the Reality because the Supreme speech itself disappears' (V.63) 'Here no methods of proving are of any avail in this investigation' (V.54). All philosophies are therefore at the most rational inferences on the subject. In a generalised way, their findings can be summed up thus: The world is born out of (a) one Supreme substance; or (b) joint action of Siva-Sakti, Purusha and Prakriti; or (c) efficient cause, instrumental cause and material cause—as in the case of an earthen pot the three elements are the potter, the wheel and the clay. The human being is the exact replica of the universe and his sufferings and joys are due to illusions arising out of his ignorance as well as past imprints and to get rid of those shackles he has to follow certain spiritual practices.

In *Amritānubhava*, Jnānadeva has reproduced the Siddha philosophy (*siddhānuvāda nirūpaṇa*) which he had learned through his illustrious preceptor Nivrittināthа and which led him to experience the final state of liberation known as Amritakalā or Paramapada and at his instance only Jnānadeva undertook to put that experience into words. This philosophy has branched out from the Sivādvaita philosophy.

Sivādvaita philosophy is believed to be a direct revelation from Lord Siva. This is also known as Sānkari Lore, Sāmbhavi Vidyā or Chidādvaita. Its founder is recognised as Gaudapādācharya. It has a large following in Kāshmir and most of its literature originated in Kāhsmir and put in print as Kāshmir Sutras.

The cardinal thoughts of this philosophy, as primarily gathered from *Amritānubhava*, *Siva-sutra* and *Tantrāloka* are as follows:

1. There exists nothing else except non-dual Pure Consciousness (Siva) which is indestructible, indescribable, unborn and imperishable. (Auspicious Prayer—verse I)
2. The Supreme Ātman out of self-love becomes the beloved, i.e. the active energy Sakti (I.2). This is a kind of stir or vibration spreading from the centre.
3. The two together create on their own person the universe of diverse shapes and forms, both sentients and insentients, without affecting their unity. (I.6–7) The initial stir develops into many spreading waves which impinge on each other evolving thereby

matter and consciousness. It is like a pageantry created by Siva as a sport.

4. The Supreme Ātman is described as 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' but it is primarily bliss only (V.6). These attributes do not convey the reality but only lead to the destination where it is in its own place (V.30, 33).

5. An embodied soul is held in bondage by ignorance (*ajñāna*) and imperfect knowledge (III.11, III.23, VI.4).

6. The individual has three coverings of impurities known as ego (*yoniḥ*) impairing the view of the Reality, illusion (*kalā*) psychic attachment with materials and men and the enjoyment thereof and destiny (*śarīra*) imprints of actions.

7. The above impurities can be removed in three ways (*upāya*) known as Sāmbhava, Sākta and Ānava. They need self-efforts, guidance of the scriptures (*śāstramata*) and the grace of the preceptor *upāyavanavasantu*).

8. The Supreme Reality first revealed in the form of the primeval sound (*mūladhvani*) 'OM', the source of speech (*śabda*) and expression (*artha*) of various things in the universe. From the world of speech (*śabdabrahma*) the Tattvās of mind and matter and their creating and directing intelligences were evolved. The manifestation of the three powers, the three qualities and the three kinds of speech are interrelated as follows;

(a) Action, indolence, and Vaikhari (*kriyā, tamas & vaikhari*)
(b) Knowledge, purity and Madhyamā (*jñāṇa, sattva & maḍhyamā*)
(c) Will-power, dynamism and Pashyanti (*icchā, rajas & pashyanti*)

The Parā speech is associated with undifferentiated power (*abhedarūpāśakti*) and primeval nature (*mūlaprakṛti*). All these elements further evolved into 36 Tattvās from Siva to earth (VII.72) and formed the perfect universe. It is Sakti herself in her own nature as consciousness experienced by Siva as consciousness.

9. Illusion (*avidyā*) is the cause of human bondage usually described by a simile—son of a barren woman—who does not exist (VI.24, 38, 42) and still it plays havoc (III.11).

10. Similarly ignorance which is falsely considered as the primeval cause of the universe (VII.277) also has no existence (VII. 283).

11. Knowledge of a certain object has three aspects primary,

secondary and original (*mūla*, *madhya* & *dāi*) there is also the fourth aspect, i.e. the Supreme knowledge (*paramajñāna*). The first three could be gained by efforts mentioned earlier but the fourth one is entirely the gift of the preceptor. What is commonly called as knowledge is only a fractional one. In the Supreme Knowledge there does not exist the trinity—the knower, the knowledge and the object of knowledge.

12. To overcome illusion, dispel ignorance and transcend the three stages of knowledge, the individual is greatly helped by the four kinds of speech:

(i) *Vaikhari*—by study of moral and ethical codes given in religious texts one develops utter sense of resignation about material objects;

(ii) *Madhyamā*—by inner voice one feels convinced of the utter futility of the sense objects and their enjoyment;

(iii) *Pashyanti*—by introspection one comes to realise that he is Siva himself;

(iv) *Parā*—by unmanifest instinctive understanding one comes to realise that 'I am that only'. Naturally one is indebted to these forms of speech (Chapter III) and one has to clear whatever debt remains in the form of a gap created by the subtle ego in the total merging (*samāveśana*) in the Supreme.

13. The merging is possible when one completely surrenders his ego at the feet of Siva (I.63-64) who is none other than the preceptor (II.79). How effortless and in an unconscious manner it takes place is expressed by using the simile of the core of a plantain stalk (*raṁbhāgarbha*, I.64).

14. Ultimately it is one's own worthy preceptor who brings about the liberation (*jīvanmuktadaśā*), by stages—destroying ignorance (II.10), dispelling illusions (II.36), removing attachment to self (II.39), destroying the ego (VII.109) and enlightenment (II.7). There remains no distinction between the preceptor and the disciple (II.61).

15. According to Sivādvaita in liberation also there are four stages: (1) Body-less state (*piṇḍamukh*), (2) status-less state (*padamukti*), (3) formless state (*rūpamukti*) and (4) transcendental state (*rūpātitamukti* or *kevalamukti*).

In other words, *Amritānubhava* contains the quintessence of Sivādvaita philosophy. It even contains the same illustrations and similes as are embodied in the philosophical treatise on Sivādvaita.

A modified version of the above philosophy is contained in the philosophy of the Siddhās, otherwise known as the Nātha Sāmpradāya. It historically starts from Gorakshanātha, as it was revealed to him by lord Dattātreya. It was first preached by Lord Dattātreya in the Kṛta-yuga to Yadu. This is handed down from one generation to another through a long chain of illustrious preceptors (*āhevatantu*, II.1). All their teachings are known as commands (*ājñā*). In this school the basic practices are the same as of Sivādvaita. Some of the important concepts of this Sāmpradāya are noted below;

1. All is Brahman; there is nothing whatsoever except this. To realise this one should surrender at the feet of the master (I.63).
2. The preceptor does not treat the disciple as a separate entity (II.13, 64).
3. The disciple has to develop an undifferentiated attitude towards all (IV.2, IX.62).
4. There is no concept of liberation because bondage and freedom are things of one's own imagination only (III.15).
5. The path is that of pure love and peace.
6. Worship takes place in a very natural way (IX.56, 59, 61).
7. Whatever is done is natural and even if one is engaged in worldly activities they create no imprints (IX.20, 21, 25, 28, & 52).
8. The activities are unrestrained. There are no do's and don'ts (IX.34, 35, & 53).
9. The truth in the form of Pure Consciousness is never in bondage; the individual being, before birth, during life and even after death, is ever free.

These are the characteristics of the life-style of those who have attained a state of liberation by rigidly following the practices laid down in the Nātha Sāmpradāya.

While thus explaining in detail the Ambrosial experience and highlighting the teachings of the two schools Jnānadeva has also referred in a passing manner to various other theories about the Supreme propounded by other schools of philosophy (V.39) and the Upanishads. He has strongly refuted the Shūnyavāda and Ajñānavāda in particular.

The Shūnyavādis hold that the belief of other schools that the Ātman is both sentient and insentient is inconsistent because it would then mean that it is a combination of two separate elements one of which is liable to change by way of creation and destruction. Since the Ātman does not exist before or after birth, during life-time also it will

be non-existent. Likewise all other objects in the universe are also destructible; hence they have no permanant existence (*sarvam kṣaṇikam kṣaṇikam*). Thus, since both the sentient and insentient objects are non-existent, the Supreme Reality also is non-existent. It is void or zero. This has been vehemently refuted by quoting several illustrations (IV.27–31).

The proponents of Ajnānavāda advance several theories about the existence of ignorance vis-a-vis the Supreme. They are:

1. Ajnāna abides under the shelter of the Supreme Reality and it veils the latter,
2. The Supreme itself is ignorance,
3. The Supreme is composed of both knowledge and ignorance,
4. Ignorance has separate existence, and
5. It exists in the Supreme in a seed form.

Having rebutted all the arguments in their favour (VII.8–84) Jnānadeva finally says that he does not feel disposed to talk any more about it. He further declares that even the ten important Upanishads have nothing more to add on the subject than what is stated in *Amritānubhava*.

To help a proper comprehension of the subject, refreshing thoughts on some ancillary topics would prove advantageous.

I. Theory of reflection (bimba-pratibimba).

The following are the basic principles of this theory enunciated in *Amritanubhava*:

1. When one looks into the mirror, he sees two faces, one which is *in situ* and the other not real but similar to the actual one reflected in the mirror. The real face is the one which causes reflection and the other reflected in the mirror enables the observer to get the perfect idea of his own face by inference (I.26).

2. It is through a mirror only that one can have proper understanding of his person; hence its necessity (VI.88).

3. In the absence of a mirror, the reflection merges into the object (I.61).

4. While looking into the mirror, though one sees two faces, he realises that the face is only one (IV.2).

5. The mirror does its job of showing the real face to the seer; it has no other purpose to serve (V.24).

6. If one embraces one's reflection by struggling hard then the seer and the reflection simultaneously disappear (VII.179).

7. When the seer and the mirror come together, there is bound to be a reflection. So too, when the seer and the faculty of seeing (mirror) come together, the view (reflection) is automatic; but in between the viewer and the view, the viewer is real and the seeing process and the view are entirely dependent upon the sweet will of the seer (VII.219).

8. The existence of the face does not depend upon its reflection in the mirror. Therefore, whether the face looks into the mirror or not, it exists by itself (VII.224).

9. Any distortion in the reflection (the universe) does not affect the object (the Supreme) reflected (I.7).

In the light of these principles one would be able to get clear perceptions of fundamentals like the Supreme Reality—Siva, His manifestation as Sakti, and the creation of the world by the latter, the *locus standi* of the individual and his goal of life. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that the analogies given in the text to illustrate the points have limited application.

Basically, Siva (the Absolute static state), Sakti (its active state) and the world created by both of them together, are not three different entities as they appear to be, but are one and the same. This has been made clear by giving illustrations of the lump of jaggery and Sahasrarjuna (VII.144, 140). First, Siva out of his desire to enjoy self took a reverse position and became his beloved Sakti and appeared as dual. Sakti, through her creative energy created the world of myriad forms and shapes including the man who is endowed with the sixth sense to understand the secrets of the universe and the Almighty. To explain this evolution of nature philosophers are often quoting the illustrations of the mirror and reflection; the seer, the process of seeing and the object seen; the enjoyer, the process of enjoyment and the objects of enjoyment. Their sole purpose is to bring home to the people that though there are apparant dualities and multiplicities there is only one entity pervading all.

The example of the mirror vividly clarifies the conception about the creation of the world. Consider the three vertices of a triangle as Siva, Sakti and the world; the latter two being the resultant reflections of Siva and Sakti respectively. The three mirrors are (a) Pure Consciousness which acts as a mirror both ways, placed in between Siva and Sakti; (b) Pure Consciousness in the form of creative energy, which acts as a mirror from the side of Sakti and placed between Sakti

and the world and (c) limited consciousness which is an opaque glass placed between Siva and the world. The first mirror reflects Siva and Sakti and shows each other their faces. The second mirror creates the reflection in the form of the world. The third glass is opaque inhibiting the direct view of Siva by the world (man). This opacity is caused by the veils of impurities (*māya*) over the limited knowledge of man (*jīvātmā*). When these veils are torn off and the knowledge is expanded, man gets a direct view of Siva (*paramātmā*). Besides, through further efforts man has the potentiality to secure complete merging into Siva, the *summum bonum* of life.

In the discussion of this topic, one often comes across the word 'real' which conveys different meanings with reference to the context. In common parlance, anything which is felt or experienced by the faculties is considered as real. The word is also used to convey a genuine thing as compared to a faked or duplicate thing; like a face is considered to be real as compared to its reflection which is unreal. However, since it is seen it is also real according to the first definition. It also refers to a substance which is indestructible and changeless and as such it is used as an attribute of the Supreme Reality. Lastly consideration of a thing to be real or otherwise depends upon the level of consciousness. In a waking condition one realises that things which he has seen in a dream were all unreal though they appeared real during the dream stage.

II. Theory regarding oneness between the seer and the seen, the object of enjoyment and the enjoyer

Consumption and conversion of one's bio-energy leads to the perception and the experience of the external things. The things on their own do not lead to perception. The sensations of pressure, sound, light, smell and taste are felt while in contact with any object by conversion of bio-energy by the law of chain-reaction. Whatever sensation one experiences, one takes the same degree and quality of the objects; in other words, the experiencer himself becomes the object. For instance, if one sees a flower, by conversion of a particular amount and degree of one's bio-energy, one assumes the shape and fragrance of that flower. Likewise. Siva and his enjoyment of the world are one and the same (IX.1–7).

III. Ignorance, Knowledge and Illusion

In all spiritual discussions, the words illusion (*avidyā*) unreal (*māyā*),

ignorance (*ajñāna*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) are repeatedly dinned into our ears; although the philosophers loudly proclaim their non-existence, we are unable to get rid of these concepts; we go on believing in their existence because we come across them daily and in fact live with them. Philosophers have conceivably termed them as impossibilities and ever non-existent by giving illustrations such as the child of a barren woman (*vāṅjā*) (VI.24, VII.82), the flower of the sky (*gagana-phula*) (VI.52, VII.82) and the horns of a hare (*śasha-viṣāṇa*) (VI.52, VII.81). Common examples may be quoted to somewhat clarify their meanings: *Illusion*—wrong knowledge of one thing mistaking it for a similar other real thing, like mistaking a rope for a serpent; *Maya*—wishing, knowing and acting principles of Siva—while one has knowledge of a thing there is complete ignorance of the substratum like the one knowing a gold-ring is not conscious that it is gold only. *Ignorance*—knowledge that one does not know about a particular thing like the one who has never seen an aeroplane is ignorant about it. *Knowledge*—having comprehension of a particular object according to his own limitations because that knowledge is only a fraction of the total knowledge. *Pure Knowledge*—It is a field of knowledge without having knowledge of any particular thing. In this state there is ignorance of total knowledge.

Ignorance and knowledge are the two extremities of the same thing. In the same continuum, illusion and unreality exist in between. If one is there the other must also be there. That means if the veil of ignorance is torn off ignorance and all the intermediary shades of knowledge and ignorance would also disappear (IV.14). That state is in a true sense a state of complete knowledgelessness. In that state the knowledge is so solid that there is no room whatsoever for additional knowledge to come in to observe and declare the existence of knowledge (VI.87).

The 'word', in Jnānadeva's own language, is a well-known aide-memoire; so while embarking upon the journey of *Amritānubhava* his guidance will be of immense value in locating and appreciating the beauty-spots spread over the ten stages of the entire journey. Here is the briefing:

Auspicious prayer—Jnānadeva offers his prayers to the Supreme Reality which is the cause of the universe and also the primeval preceptor in order to explore His secrets.

Chapter I—Instinct of self-love transformed the Supreme Siva into his beloved Sakti. Both of them lived as a happy couple. Sakti

feeling embarrassed in moving about with her formless husband covered him with a multicoloured robe of the universe. The presence of the third, however, did not intrude upon their unity and oneness. In such a state of oneness, Jnānadeva could not afford to remain separate. Therefore, surrendering his ego he got merged in Siva-Sakti, ever abiding as one.

Chapter II—On the spiritual path, the worthy preceptor hastens the progress of his disciple. He does not make any distinction between great and small while distributing the grace in the form of liberation. What he expects of the disciple is self-sacrifice in devotion. The preceptor makes all-out efforts to ensure that the disciple's illusion, ignorance and even his knowledge are completely destroyed. He is very solid in his capabilities to save anyone from drowning in the water in the form of the world which does not exist and the beauty of it is that the saved one thereafter is nowhere seen. By offering homage to such a preceptor Nivrittinātha, Jnānadeva cleared his debts owed to the four kinds of speech.

Chapter III—The four kinds of speech with illusion, which created concepts of freedom and bondage, sacrificed themselves and re-appeared in the form of knowledge. But that also created bondage. That bondage, which would have remained even after death, was removed by surrendering at the feet of the preceptor.

Chapter IV—Ignorance brings in its wake knowledge and both together get extinguished and what remains is only Pure Knowledge which is even unaware of its own existence.

Chapter V—The Supreme is generally indicated by the three attributes Sat-Chit-Ānanda. But they do not really mean it. They only lead to the inference about the existence of the Supreme. As a matter of fact it is pure bliss existence of which is known by a knowing principle. Although it is beyond modes of proof and expression, words are used to denote him because the 'word' acts at least as a remembrancer.

Chapter VI—Although the 'word' is useful in so many ways, it is of no avail in gaining self-knowledge. It is unable to establish the existence of illusion because the latter does not exist; if the word indicates something which does not exist it means that the word is futile. The Ātman which is self-evident does not need the assistance of anyone including the 'word' to establish its existence.

Chapter VII—Various theories are propounded about the existence of ignorance. Dealing with each one, they are refuted by sharp

logic and several illustrations. Ultimately it is proved that it does not exist. In fact Jnānadeva opines that there is no propriety of even uttering the word ignorance. The entire world of moveables and immovables is the creation of the Supreme for himself to enjoy; the difference which is experienced as the seer and the object of seeing is not real. Even his seeing is not real; because when he sees he sees not and when he does not see he sees.

Chapter VIII—The preceptor Nivrittināthа has brought Jnānadeva to such a state that there is no knowledge of ignorance in him; naturally as a corollary there is no knowledge also. Even otherwise both the words ignorance and knowledge convey quite contrary meanings. Therefore, eliminating both, the effulgent sun of Pure Knowledge only keeps on blazing.

Chapter IX—In the state of liberation the duality as the enjoyer and the object of enjoyment ceases because the objects themselves turn into the enjoyers. When enjoying thus there is a state of complete inactivity from within and therefore the objects of the enjoyment cease to affect the enjoyer. Here all that happens including the worship happens in a natural way without the doer being conscious of it. Even in devotion there is no activity or knowledge. It is the greatness of the preceptor that he considered Jnānadeva as his nearest kith and kin and offered him the sovereign state of beatitude.

Chapter X—It was due to the kindness of the preceptor Nivrittināthа that the present work was undertaken. No doubt there is nothing new which has been divulged here. It is the state of the ambrosial experience which is coveted for even by those who have already reached the state of liberation. After offering the delicious menu, all prepared from the nectar, Jnānadeva finally invokes the blessings for humanity thus: 'let all, those in bondage, those who are liberated and those desiring liberation enjoy the beatitude of the highest state of liberation' (*paramapada*). Thus he wants to ensure that his dream of making the entire world happy would come true.

On the way of your journey you will not fail to take refreshing sips from the Pierian springs to overcome your fatigue. Their locations are indicated below:

A smart lady (Sakti) making her *fiancé* (Siva) wear the beautiful suit of the world to conceal his formless figure (I.30).

A capable guide who saves his disciple from drowning in water which does not exist (II.21).

The Supreme exists everywhere but not found anywhere (II.26).

The sun who never met darkness is called the enemy of darkness (II.34).

Knowledge getting itself extinguished by drinking too much of ignorance (IV.10).

The rising and falling in quick succession of woman's breasts (IV.8).

A thief binding himself along with the bundle of stolen articles (IV.4).

Music appreciated by music only before the musical instrument is manufactured (V.48).

Mischievous word creating quarrels and becoming an arbitrator (VI.5).

The 'word' making his great-grandfather Siva behave in a funny manner (VI.7).

Intelligence trying to take out cream from the milk which is in the cow's udder (VII.63).

Someone abruptly getting up from sleep in search of sleep (VII.75).

A son of a barren woman being garlanded with sky flowers in a hall supported by the horns of hares (VII.81, 82).

Ignorance and knowledge are like a couple trying to exchange their places by cutting their heads with a view to put them on to the torso of another (VIII.13, 14).

The preceptor doing a wonderful job of awaking one who is already awake and putting one to sleep who is already in sleep (IX.66).

The speech transcending the silence of silence (X.17).

The flights of poetic fancy, the scintillating flashes of intelligence, intriguing and baffling assertions, minute phenomenal observations are all noticeable throughout the text compelling variegated moods such as wonder, amazement, amusement, joy and seriousness to rise in the minds of the readers.

Pointed attention needs to be drawn to Chapter I which provides a compact guide for a couple on 'how to live happily' and Chapter II which is a hand-out for modern trainers on 'how to build rapport between the trainee and the trainer'.

Any rational man is bound to ask the question, of what use is the reading of someone else's experience—even if that be of highest liberation—if that fails to give him the taste. Apparently the argument seems to be true; but it is the unique quality of all Siddha literature

that unless it is read between the lines and one gets merged in their deeper meaning the secrets are not revealed or understood. The key-note for experiencing the actual state of liberation described in Chapter IX is found in Chapter I where Jnānadeva explains how he himself attained that state. It is the self-surrender at the feet of the master 'Nivrittināthа', (not any individual as such but the personified Supreme) by dissolving even the subtlest state of ego and getting rid of ignorance by Sāmbhavi Mudrā or by practicing natural state (*amanaskasthiti*) hinted in Chapter VII while describing the seeing and non-seeing activity of the Supreme.

Another aspect of the spiritual practice indirectly mentioned in the text is the removal of the duality. It is the root cause of multiplicity and all consequential troubles and miseries of the world. Jnānadeva has mentioned more than fifty such dualities which can be classified as under:

1. Complementary: like a substance and its property; Siva-Sakti, fire-heat, wind-motion, camphor-fragrance, etc.,
2. Supplementary: knower—object of knowing, disciple-preceptor, ocean-river etc.
3. Contrary: day-night, light-darkness, bondage-freedom, knowledge-ignorance, chit-achit etc.
4. Having cause and effect relationship: firewood-fire, Parisa-gold, lamp-light, sleep-dream, water-ripples etc.
5. Mistaken identities—rope-serpent, mirage-air etc.
6. Imaginary creations: sky-flower, hare-horn, barren lady—child etc.

Some of these dualities are easy to get rid of like removing the lower garment by loosening its outer tuck (II.48). Some are like garments sticking closely to the body; when they are removed with a firm understanding that they are all showy and useless then the undraped pristine beauty of the Supreme is visualised (V.33).

Similarly Jnānadeva has not in vain repeated the simile of mirror and reflection more than twenty-five times and given the illustration of camphor nearly ten times in the text of eight hundred verses. He intends to convey and emphasize the message of unity and homogeneity. Reflection in the form of the universe is caused by one's face alone and it makes one realise one's own face in its place; similarly the colour, lustre and fragrance of camphor are all aspects of camphor only.

Hopefully, one can delve deep into this work with the hints

provided in the text for merging of the personal stream of life into the ocean of the Supreme described in Chapter X.28.

Literature is considered to be the reflection of contemporary times. In the text we have glimpses of the socio-economic milieu.

Social conditions. During the thirteenth century the Marāthās were ruling in the region, and the life by and large was peaceful. The family relations appeared to be cordial and harmonious; women had status only when they were married and their husbands were living (I.21 & VI.63); They used to wear auspicious thread round their necks (II.1). Other ornaments in use were 'Nāg', rings, bracelets (IX.12). The higher class of women were also using necklaces prepared from jewels, pearls etc., (I.57, II.73). Women were also fond of wearing flowers in their braids (IX.2). People had good taste for food and were fond of varieties (I.20,36,45; X.24). People never liked to wear clothes without wash (VII.127). There was religious custom of inviting the couples for food (I.20). The caste system had deep roots in the social structure and the contact of a low caste person was considered as polluting the body (I.53, II.30). The children were anointed with ointment (VII.62). They used to play with balls (IX.57). For making children behave, elders used to call out an imaginary goblin (III.13, VI.100). Garments in general use were Dhoties (II.48), Madavis (VII.126), close upper garments like Kanchukis (V.33), coverings like Bunthis (II.32) and Kholas (VII.295), Saris of different colours and designs (VII.147, IX.46).

Customs and traditions. People were religious-minded. For worship they used images and idols, but in their absence they substituted rice grains and worshipped them with flowers and conscecrated rice (IX.45). There were plenty of temples (IX.37). To remove the evil spirits people used to go to certain temples and propitiate the Deity for relief (V.36). There were exorcists who could invoke evil spirits to satisfy the evil designs of their customers (VI.7). People used to go to the temples for swearing (VI.39, VII.102). People were fond of consulting astrologers for getting over their present troubles and knowing the future (II.24).

Pastimes and culture. Gambling (VII.116), betting (VII.31), watching jugglery and magic shows (VI.32) and horse-shows (VII.4) were some of their pastimes. Some were interested in nature painting (VI.35, 102). Occasional white-wash of the walls of the houses was not

unknown to them (VI.101). Playing on the Vina (V.41) was considered as an accomplishment. A kind of artistic dance to the accompaniment of stick-sounds was also in vogue (I.18).

Agriculture, trade and commerce. The main crops were rice (VI.35), cotton (VII.263) and sugar-cane (IX.18). Agriculture was mostly done with rainwater and stagnant waters of wells and tanks (IV.39) as well as natural streams (III.29) and channels dug from them (VI.50). For storing grain corn-bins (V.51) were used. From sugar-cane agricultarists were preparing jaggery lumps for sale (VII.144). Cotton provided raw material for hand loom industry (VII.141, 147). People were preparing ink for writing with indigenous materials (VI.36). Business community as usual had their eyes on profits and were maintaining accounts for that purpose. There were traditional vocational communities like pot-makers, carpenters (VII.4), goldsmiths, blacksmiths, retail shopkeepers (VII.144), weavers, land surveyors etc. Pure gold was of sixteen standard units but fifteen standard units were adequate for recognising gold as pure gold (X.27). People knew the smelting process of metals such as iron, gold etc. (III.5). On the basis of some criteria the region seems to have been divided into small units such as villages (II.30, VIII.10), cities (VII.77) and provinces (VI.76). Litigation scene presented the same state as of today. Justice went in favour of the one who could engage the best advocate (VI.6). In complicated cases the advocates could use all their skill of pleadings to lead evidence (V.54–56). Good advocates were not enthusiastic about taking briefs in weak cases (VII.54). Occasionally greasing of the palm was necessary to get success in litigation (VII.79).

Science. People seemed to be fairly knowledgeable in respect of scientific developments. They were aware of scientific principles such as: the smallest particle of matter 'Paramānu' (I.11, III.28); tides are caused by the moon (X.5); the sea-water evaporates to form clouds and they in turn fill the seas with rain-water (X.3, V.21); when a person dies his mind and sense faculties also die (II.3); in between sleep and awaking condition there is an intermediary state (VII.187); trees get nourishment through the roots by absorbing water and minerals embedded in the earth (VII.92); there is no honey in flowers unless the pollen-sac is developed (V.42).

Coming to the external form of *Amritānubhava*, it is composed in 'Ovi' metre which was Jnānadeva's forte; in fact 'Ovi' metre was considered

as inseparable from Jnānadeva. It is a verse consisting of four lines, the first three lines having alliterations of end letters; the first three lines contain letters ranging between five and fifteen and the fourth line has always less number of letters than the first three lines. The beauty of this metre is, it is very easy for composition; it enables smooth and continuous flow of thought and it is very suitable to the sentiment of peace. The number of verses varies between 780 and 807 both in the manuscripts and printed texts. Dr. Gokhale has done great research on this subject and he has come out with an edition (published in 1967) of 800 verses from old authentic texts. For translation of the work, the edition of Sākhare Mahāraj (1951) is used as the text. It consists of 806 verses of which verses V.18, VI.78, VII.37, IX.6, IX.42 and X.29 are not found in Gokhale's edition. Verse VI.78 is more or less the repetition of verse IV.21 and it appears to be redundant in the context. In different texts there are many variations, which are due to the fact that in the absence of printing, people used to learn them by heart and pass them on to subsequent generations; while so doing there have been various changes according to one's own understanding. The original text, as the scholars claim, was undivided. But later on it was divided into chapters varying from four to ten. Most versions contain ten chapters but in their titles also there is no uniformity.

The greatness of the work can be judged from the fact that it is translated into several languages and there are good number of poetic renderings and copious commentaries. Here are a few excerpts from what the learned have to say about the work:

Since Ramana Maharshi had no knowledge of Marāthi, his disciple Āthavale presented him a Sanskrit rendering of Amritānubhava done by Badve. After he finished his reading he rapturously told Āthavale, "You did a great service to me; in this work, I had a direct vision of Jnānadeva. So far, I had only heard of him but now I am fully convinced. Jnānadeva was a king of saints. How great! I have no words to describe his greatness!"

A scholar observes thus: "In *Amritānubhava*, there is abundance of illustrations, there is stature of philosophy and the limit of personal experience but hardly any poetry. This is all true; the opening and summing up are the master-pieces of rhetoric and there is no doubt that his poetic genius in creating an imagery of the unmanifest is

unique. The economy in poetic diction has reached a limit rendering the comprehension of the subject very difficult. Except for the lavish use of illustrations, no other aspect of poetics has received adequate treatment. There is a total absence of poetic sentiments. Even while discussing philosopical matters, one suspects there is too much show of words. It is very clear that the abstruse nature of the subject has come in the way of the work gaining in popularity. All the same, *Amritānubhava* serves as a model in putting across to the public the highest philosophical knowledge in the most logical manner with the aid of appropriate illustrations".

Here is another opinion: "One cannot help observing that even in Sanskrit literature there is hardly any work which can stand comparison with *Amritānubhava*. It is a work of the highest order on philosophy. It is a nectar of experience. Like Jnāneshwari, this work is equally lucid and is enriched by poetic diction and figures of speech. The genius of Saint Jnāneshwar has no comparison in expressing philosophy in an absorbing and fascinating poetic style. One can hardly come across in any literature of the world such a fine coalescence of poetry and philosophy!"

After all there is bound to be divergence of views as they are conditioned by the number and the colour of the glasses which the critics are used to wear.

The humble attempt of Introduction would be considered to be fully rewarded if it could induce and stimulate the reader to have a plunge into *Amritānubhava* to taste the nectar which Jnānadeva has so magnanimously offered.

ॐ

श्री ज्ञानदेवाय नमः

OM

Salutation to Shri Jnānadeva

अमृतानुभव

AMBROSIAL EXPERIENCE

मंगलाचरण

Auspicious Prayer

1

यदक्षरमनाख्येयमानंदमजमव्ययम् ।
श्रीमान्निवृत्ति नाथेति ख्यातं दैवतमाश्रये ।।

I seek refuge in the God who is indestructible, indescribable, pure bliss incarnate, unborn, unchangeable and known as Nivrittinātha.

2

गुरुरित्याख्यया लोके साक्षाद्विद्या हि शांकरी ।
जयत्याज्ञा नमस्तस्यै दयार्द्रायै निरंतरम् ।।

Hail to that Sānkari Lore, known as Supreme in the world, (the most auspicious) the very knowledge personified and ever merciful! I bow to that Lore.

3

सार्धं केन च कस्यार्थं शिवयोः समरूपिणोः ।
ज्ञातुं न शक्यते लग्नमिति द्वैतच्छलान्मुहुः ।।

Siva—Sakti is one and the same; however, there being deceptive appearance of duality in form, it is difficult even on constant thinking to know which half-part of one is combined with that of the other to form one whole.

4

अद्वैतमात्मनस्तत्वं दर्शयंतौ मिथस्तराम् ।
तौ वंदे जगतामाद्यौ तयोस्तत्त्वाभिपत्तये ।।

Both of them point to the essential unity in their primal form.

They are the primordial cause (parents) of the universe. I bow to them to reach their true state.

5

मूलायाग्राय मध्याय मूलमध्याग्रमूर्तये ।
क्षीणाग्रमूलमध्याय नमः पूर्णाय शंभवे ॥

I reverentially bow to that integral Sambhu, who is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world, who manifests in the states of childhood, youth and ripe age and for whom there is no beginning, growth or end.

Notes: While commencing any composition, it has been an old convention to offer prayers to and invoke the blessings of the God and the preceptor (Guru). In that traditional style Jnānadeva offers his prayers.

In this treatise he is putting down his ambrosial experience gained by the Siddhās' spiritual practices learned from his preceptor Nivrittinātha. The philosophy followed by the Siddhās is commonly known as 'Non-dual', 'Pure Consciousness', 'Pure Knowledge', 'Advaita', 'Sānkari' or 'Sāmbhavi' lore.

After describing the intrinsic nature of the Absolute (Siva) and the essential features of the Sankari lore, the relationship among the Absolute (Siva), Vibration or energy (Sakti) and the universe (Jagat) is very succinctly brought out. While invoking the blessing of Siva and Sakti to secure the first-hand knowledge and experience of the Absolute, he has also paid homage to his preceptor Nivrittinatha in very glowing terms. In the last verse the integrated picture of Siva is delineated with the utmost economy of pen-strokes.

CHAPTER I

शिवशक्ति समावेशन

The Absolute, Siva, and his active Power, Sakti, abiding together

1

I pay obeisance to the God and Goddess who are thus unconditioned primordial parents of the universe.

Note: There are two entities which bring about creation; the instrumental cause and the material cause. Siva (father) and Sakti (mother) both together have created the universe. Since they are two, a doubt may arise as to how they are unconditioned. However, as explained in verse 4 of the prayer, they are only two aspects of the one and the same thing. Hence there is no limitation to the primal cause.

2

The very lover (Siva) impelled by a desire to enjoy himself assumes a reverse position and becomes the Beloved (Sakti), occupying the same beautiful place, having the same likeness as Siva, (or sharing the same pleasures) and the same body features.

Note: Just as anyone desirous of enjoying his own beauty looks at his reflection in the opposite mirror, Siva sees his reflection Sakti. For identifying anything the description of its nature, appearance and features is necessary. Here Sakti is described by stating that she has the same base—Bliss, the same appearance and the same features. The two are not separate as father and son or milk and curd; but they appear as separate though one due to change of state or position like an actor appearing different when he plays the different roles of a king or a pauper.

3

In the flush of love, they consume each other's body; They however reproduce each other to maintain duality.

Note: In the state of intense love, duality is forgotten but when there is consciousness of enjoyment, duality appears again as the enjoyer and the object of enjoyment.

4

They are neither one, as they are not exactly alike; nor are they two, as they are not very much different. How can we understand their nature and form!

Note: The two things are said to be different when the substance and existence of each is independent of the other. Here the substance is one but the existence is interdependent e.g. water and ripples.

5

How intense is their desire to enjoy themselves! (While enjoying) they merge their duality and become one so much so that even for sheer fun they do not allow their unity to break.

Note: The apparent duality is explained by 'Vivarta doctrine' of the Advaita philosophy; viz. a thing without undergoing any change in its form or substance, by mere change of position or situation can appear dual, like a coin appearing different when its position is reversed. It is one of the fundamental principles of 'Siddha system' or 'Shāmbhavi lore'.

6

Still they feared separation and gave birth to a child of the size of the universe. However, their duality (mutual love) remained undivided.

Note: It is a psychological phenomenon that the mutual love of an issueless couple diminishes in the course of time. The birth of a child serves as a knot to strengthen their conjugal bond; however when their love is subsequently shared by a child, it again starts diminishing; so there is constant fear of separation either way; Siva and Sakti take great care not to allow that eventuality to occur.

7

Even though they behold the universe of movables and immovables on their own person, they do not permit themselves to be affected by the contact of the third.

Note: Although the universe is born to them, it has no separate existence apart from them. It is the part and parcel of their own body only. Therefore, the couple remains impervious to the activities of the

universe. The ever changing phenomenon of the names and forms is like the ripples in the water. They may rise or disappear but the water at the substratum remains calm and placid.

8

They occupy the same seat of authority; they are decorated with the same ornamental mantle of light; both are thus living merrily as one since eternity.

Note: The Supreme alone is the base of their existence and knowledge is the authority with which they function.

9

The very distinction (personified) went out to trace duality for enjoying it but being put to shame (not having traced any) plunged into bliss found in their union.

Note: What a master stroke of fancy to describe the unbreakable union of Siva and Sakti! The theory of creation of the universe explained hereunder is known as the doctrine of vibration (*sphuraṇavāda*). From the Absolute Brahman i.e. the static state, the idea of enjoying the self-created power, in the form of rotating and spreading waves. In the functioning state, the universe or all appearances are in the associated state. In knowing, analysing, understanding and enjoying, it is the consciousness. Thus there are three evolutionary stages of what is one and the same. They are: (i) The Absolute, Truth, Brahman, the Supreme, the Ātman, Siva by whatever name it might be called; (ii) Energy—Sakti in latent as well as manifested form of energy particle; (iii) Mass and consciousness, i.e. the universe. In other words, all the three are one and the same. There is no second or third to take a count.

10

The Goddess has attained perfection through the God, while the (ascetic) God is a non-entity but for her.

Note: Although their interdependence is highlighted here, the basic concept that they are one and the same, as further explained, is not to be lost sight of.

11

How profound is their love for each other! The two find the entire universe too small for them to live in but they are also seen living happily in the most minute particle.

Note: They find that the palatial universe is not adequate to meet their requirements but they are happy in each other's company even in the smallest place. On that score they do not want their mutual love to lessen. How they subsist at macro and micro level is explained here.

12

Without each other, they cannot create even a blade of grass. They form the very life-force of each other.

Note: Each by itself is powerless to do or create anything. A similar idea is found in Sankarā's Soundarya Lahari. "Siva in combination with Sakti dominates the universe but without her indeed, although he is expert, he cannot make even the blade of grass to move".

13

In the house of the universe, they are the only two. When the master goes to sleep, the lady of the house keeps awake playing the part of both.

14

Should, perchance, anyone of the two wake up from sleep (to the state of the self), the entire household will be swallowed up and they will remain inactive.

Note: The above two verses are interrelated. The Lord i.e. the Absolute, with a view to enjoy his self assumes the form of Sakti—the beloved. He forgets his state of self, that is his sleep. Sakti's awareness of duality makes her assume the form of the universe of multiple names and forms. The expansion of the universe thus takes place when Sakti performs the functions in the dual capacity as the enjoyer and the objects of enjoyment. Her awareness of duality is her waking state but all the same it is in reality her sleeping state; just as a dreamer remains in a sleeping state while dreaming although he is awake in a different plane experiencing the phenomenon of a dream-world.

Thus the universe comes into existence when both Siva and Sakti are sleeping. However, if Siva wakes up to reality then he will not transform himself into his beloved Sakti. Therefore there will not be any material cause for creation. Similarly, if Sakti wakes up i.e. she realises that she is not separate from Siva, then also, the universe will not come into being. The waking state mentioned in the latter verse is different from the one stated in the former verse.

15

They both (Siva-Sakti) melt their forms in the Supreme. They become two separate halves (for indulging in their play) before flowing in diverse streams.

Note: Men of Realisation understand that there is oneness in the entire universe. They behold unity in diversity. Truth and static energy constitute one half of it (Siva) and dynamic energy and its circling and spreading waves constitute the other half (Sakti). From these two spring up multiple streams such as polar attractions and repulsions, mass, volume and consciousness known with different names and forms constituting the universe.

16

They both abide, one as the object (of enjoyment) and the other as the subject (enjoyer), in relation to each other and live happily on account of each other.

17

There exists Siva only, the distinction as female and male being only in name. The entire universe is created by the two halves—of one.

Note: All the objects and appearances are only associations of atoms. If atom is disintegrated, then the fundamental energy particle is found; it is an electromagnetic field with a positive and negative polar charge. These are two halves of one. How this phenomenon occurs is explained in the next two verses.

18

Two sticks produce only one sound, two flowers only one fragrance, two lamps only one light;

19

Two lips utter only one word, two eyes give only one vision—likewise even though they seem to be two they are only one pervading the universe.

20

The couple existing from eternity in dual form is enjoying the same favourite menu.

Note: This indicates that they have the same taste and they are never tired of enjoying the same phenomena.

21

The chaste and devoted wife (Sakti) does not subsist without the power of her Lord. The all-doer (Siva) is nobody without her.

Note: To maintain their individual status, how each is fully dependent upon another is once again emphasized.

22

Since the husband is seen in her and her existence means the husband only, it is not possible to identify the one between the two.

Note: Siva is the Absolute static state; the substratum of all. Sakti is its dynamic functioning, the basic wave-energy. If these two aspects are kept well in mind, the logic in the above verse will be easy to understand. Compare Siva and Sakti to a vast expanse of water and waves. When we see waves, what is actually seen is water only. Conversely the appearance of waves is due to water only. How then to distinguish one from the other! In the final analysis there is water only which abides. The idea is further elaborated in the following few verses.

23

Any attempt to draw distinction between jaggery and sweetness or camphor and fragrance becomes disabled.

24

While trying to get hold of the entire light, only the flame gets in the hand; in that way while thinking of her true state, only Siva is found.

25

The sun shines on account of his lustre, while the essence of lustre is nothing but the sun; swallowing this distinction lustre alone abides.

26

An object is the base for its reflection and the reflection is the exact copy of the object (reflected). So it (the Absolute) parades itself in dual form.

27

She (Sakti) married a person (Siva) who is the essence of the complete void. Because of her husband's power, Sakti came into prominence.

Note: In this and following verses, Siva and Sakti's mutual dealings and powers and their spheres of activities and responsibilities are described as if a couple is managing the house. They provide a blue-print of an ideal life-style for a household couple.

Void itself connotes the idea that there is nothing. Siva is even beyond that state of nothingness. The idea of nothingness also does not exist there. He has, however, infinite power which is delegated to his wife Sakti to create and rule the universe.

28

Siva cannot sustain his position as 'Siva' without his beloved who was brought up by Siva.

Note: Without the functioning of energy, Siva remains static; however Siva is the source of Sakti which in a dynamic state according to Siddha system, operates in various forms such as self-generated, supreme, secondary, subtle and bio-current—performing various functions. This is how Siva brought her up.

29

She brought glory to the Lord by creating and sustaining the universe from her own body through self-effort.

30

The husband has no form; feeling shy to parade herself (in his company) she made for him an ornamental dress of forms and names in the form of universe.

Note: Sakti beautiful as she is, felt embarrassed to move about in the company of Siva who had no form. In order to impress others that they are made for each other she followed the dictum that dress maketh a man and prepared a matching dress for him.

31

Where there is famine even of oneness, the lucky one (Sakti) arranged with ease the grand show of plurality.

Note: Siva the Absolute is Advaita per se. It cannot brook even mention of one without a second. That state of oneness will bring to mind that it is some state in contradistinction of other state. Hence there is scarcity of oneness. Sakti is lucky because she made it possible to happen i.e. to exhibit multiplicity and that too without much ado.

32

By melting her own body she brought prosperity to her husband who by his self-denial established his beloved.

Note: Siva and Sakti make supreme sacrifice for the sake of each other. When Sakti gives up her life by dissolving her body in Siva, the latter shines in his full glory as the Absolute or the Supreme. Similarly when Siva by self-abnegation reduces himself to non-entity, Sakti becomes predominant displaying all her natural beauty in the form of the universe.

As a matter of fact both Siva and Sakti are infinite and they co-exist. There is no possibility of one getting extinct and the other remaining; so, the phenomena described here would be impossible to occur. However, for the sake of understanding, one can visualise these phenomena as a third party observing the scene. Some illustrations will make this point clear. When one is looking at water of the river, if one concentrates his attention on ripples only he will not see anything except ripples; however, if one concentrates on water he will not observe anything but water. In a psychological test, while looking at the reversible configuration of black and white, if one concentrates on a white portion he sees the form of a glass, whereas if one concentrates on a black portion, he sees the contours of the two faces opposite to each other.

Here is an extra-ordinary couple. Both husband and wife do utmost sacrifice to add to and bring to limelight the glories of the other partner.

33

Out of intense desire to see her, he whets his seeing faculty; on failing to see her, he collapses while standing.

Note: As a matter of fact, he is both an observer and the observed object. When he assumes the role of an observer he does not see the object and therefore abandons the idea of seeing. Siva is so impatient to see Sakti that he makes supreme effort but when he fails to spot her out, he lets himself loose and falls down with a bang.

When the observer and the observed is the same, the process of observance is bound to fail. However, the realisation of basic unity may result in dropping down of the falsehood of duality. Falling of Siva after failing to see his counterpart Sakti, signifies this phenomenon.

34

In contact with the wife (or out of regard for the wife) he grew as big as the universe. Without her he remains naked.

Note: Creation takes place due to cajolling by Sakti; but if the wife is not there, there is no one to take care of him. When the covering of names and forms is removed, he naturally remains in his natural original state.

35

He who has lost himself in expansion (pervading in all) remains in a subtle form. Through her grace only he assumed the form of the universe.

36

She wakes up Siva, serves him various known dishes (in the form of sense objects prepared by her). He eats them including the server also and feels gratified.

Note: The waking of Siva means the manifestation of the Absolute state. In that state, the Supreme Brahman only abides. Sakti does not survive. All the objects of sensual attraction disappear.

(In the following verses, the process of creation is explained.)

37

While the husband is asleep, she gives birth to the universe of moveables and immoveables; when she takes rest, he ceases to exist as husband.

38

When the husband remains hidden on account of her he cannot be traced. Otherwise, they both serve as mirrors to each other.

Note: Normally, when both remain within the field of vision of each other, then each is reflected in the other. By looking at Sakti, one can see Siva reflected in her though one may not be able to see Siva

directly and vice-versa. In the present circumstances, however, Siva cannot be found out by looking at Sakti because he is concealed by her by putting a mantle of universe over him (see verse I.30). Therefore, instead of Siva, one can only see the universe in Sakti.

39

Siva enjoys his own bliss by her body contact. He cannot enjoy even a bit of all that bliss without her.

40

She is the body of her lover; and the lover is her beauty. Mixing the two ingredients they have a hearty meal.

Note: When body and beauty are conceived as separate then the phenomenon of the universe is seen. When they are perceived as one then one can enjoy the Supreme Spirit or Brahman.

(*Their oneness is illustrated in the following three verses.*)

41

As wind and motion go together, gold and shine go together, Siva and Sakti go together. They form one whole.

Note: In Tantrāloka the same idea is explained thus—'There is no Siva without Sakti, nor Sakti without Siva'.

42

As fragrance is associated with musk, heat with fire, so too, Sakti is exclusively with Siva.

43

When night and day arrive at the abode of the sun, (they cease to exist). In that way (Siva and Sakti) their duality is found unreal in the Supreme Brahman.

Note: In the presence of the sun, who is solid effiugence only, night and day exist not. It is all light; so in the Supreme Brahman, the dual existence of Siva and Sakti does not survive.

44

Nay, Siva and Sakti (in their state of unity) become jealous of the well-established status of the letter Pranava (OM).

Note: It is said that the entire universe is nothing but the expansion of the Pranava, the sound (OM) which is akin to the original sound (*mūladhvani*) when the first movement (*spanda*) started by the will-power of Siva who being tired of remaining single wanted to become many. The Siva (*bindu*) created Sakti (*bīj*). It is by this division of Siva and Sakti that there arises the creative ideation (*saṅkalpasṛṣṭi*). When the vibrations started, first the world of words (*śabdabrahman*) originated. It is constituted of language (*śabda*) and ideas and the objects (*artha*) they denote. From this are evolved the Tattvās of mind and matter in all their various forms as also their Lords, i.e. their directing intelligences and the five forms of matter. Thus as explained in Māndukya Upanishad, all that is past, present and future is verily 'OM'. In other words, all that was, that is and that shall be, cognised by our forefathers, by ourselves and by our children is the expansion of 'OM' only which is, unchanging in all the three periods of time.

Siva and Sakti in their united aspect merrily destroyed all that is created by the Pranava 'OM'. How that is done is explained in the next verse. To give a human touch to the whole episode, it is stated that Siva-Sakti became jealous of and antagonistic to Pranava seeing his glorious expanse and that they prepared a nice sweet dish out of him and had a nice feast.

45

Let it be; 'to the Siva and his consort who having devoured a sweet dish (Shirā) of names and forms has brought to light the underlying meaning of their oneness, I bow', says Jnānadeva.

Note: Shira is a special kind of sweet-dish of Mahārashtra prepared from the wheat flour, sugar and ghee. In the illustration the sweet-dish is the world of different forms and names. When that is consumed and finished what remains is the Supreme.

46

In mutual embrace both get dissolved (in the Supreme) thereby turning the entire darkness (ignorance) into light (Pure Knowledge).

47

While trying to determine their real nature the gross form of speech (Vaikhari) along with the other subtlest form of speech (Parā) get dissolved (in silence) in the way the Gangā along with the sea gets submerged in waters at the time of the dissolution of the universe.

48

The frantic wind gets absorbed in the cavity of the sky or the sun along with its brilliance gets consumed in the conflagration at the time of the deluge.

49

In that way, while observing them closely, the seer and the act of seeing cease to exist. To such an omnipresent couple, I again bow.

50

In their stream the one who is thirsty of knowledge not only does not get water of knowledge to drink but gets swept off to death.

Note: Anyone trying to understand the Reality gets dissolved into it. The knower, knowing and knowledge get merged in it.

51

Such being the state, were I to remain distinct (from distinctionless Siva-Sakti) just to bow, it would be formally attributing distinction to them.

52

My bowing is like a gold ornament paying regards to gold from which it is not distinct.

53

Were the faculty of speech to pronounce the word 'speech' the one pronouncing and that which is pronounced would be distinct; yet the word 'speech' will not be contaminated by any such distinction.

54

(In the manner of speaking) the Gangā meets the sea, there is only a show of different names (the Gangā is feminine and the sea is masculine according to Marāthi grammar); should that lead to any distinction in their water?

(In the following five verses the indivisible unity and oneness of Siva and Sakti are emphasized by various illustrations.)

55

Just see, both the illuminated (object) and the illumination abide in the sun; does the sun thereby lose his oneness?

56

The moon-light is spread over the fat belly of the moon; (the two are not different). When the lamp is caught up in its light, does it cause any deficiency in its light?

57

When the lustre of a pearl sticks on to it it adds distinct fineness to it.

58

Is Pranav (Om) considered as dissected because it is a triad of three syllables (*a*, *u* and *m*). Does the letter 'ण' stand split up because it is formed by three strokes?

59

Why should not the water enjoy the fragrance of the flower-buds in the form of ripples if it (smelling) in no way affects its capital (the quality of water) but earns profit of gracefulness.

Note: In one way, it is a businesslike approach. The underlying idea is that there is no harm in continuing any business if there is no loss of capital but there is profit also.

60

Therefore, without making any distinction between Bhūtesh and Bhawāni (Siva and Sakti) I proceed to bow to them thus—

61

When the mirror is put aside, the reflection enters its object; when the air is still, ripples get drowned (in water).

62

Or else, with the departure of sleep one immediately realises his own self; in that way discarding my power of discrimination I bowed to the Goddess and the God.

Note: A thing appears in two different forms because there is

always a third i.e. a change—agent. The face and its image in a mirror are two because of the presence of a mirror. Similarly water and ripples are two because there is wind. In such circumstances, the removal of the agent serves to restore the oneness of the object. Here it is the discriminating faculty of man which has caused the dual appearance of the Supreme. Hence Jnānadeva discarded that discriminating intellect and realised the Absolute. This verse explains how the state of natural existence (*sahajāvasthā*) is secured in Siddha practices.

When one gets up from sleep and becomes wakeful he has to pass through an intermediate stage (*dahabhāna*) of gaining body consciousness. In that state, there lingers on a faint memory of sleep which is just over and there is a dim awareness of being woken up. So to come to the natural state of waking, one has to give up sleep as well as the intermediary state. Similarly, to obtain the natural state (*sahajāvasthā*) the sleep state that 'I am the body, I possess this and that' etc., has first to disappear. Then the intermediary state that 'I am Siva' etc., and the subtle form of ego must go. Having passed through these two stages, when one enters the world to carry on his worldly activities, that state is called (*sahajāvasthā*). In this state distinction between Siva and Sakti is also not noticed. Jnānadeva says, 'by forgetting the separate existence of Siva and Sakti and getting merged in their union, I offered my salutations.'

63

As the salt by giving up attachment of its salty taste becomes sea (by merging in it), likewise by giving up the ego I became Siva-Sakti.

Note: This verse contains the essence of the spiritual practice of Siddhās. It means that by complete surrender of self at the feet of the Lord Sambhu one can attain the highest status in the spiritual field known as Paramapada. This is obtained by special initiation known as Sāmbhavi practice. It is like exchanging something trifling for a precious treasure. Really speaking the ego-sense is so insignificant as compared to self-realisation that anyone should be ready for such an exchange; but one does not do so on his volition for the simple reason that he considers the ego as the most valuable because without it he will lose his identity. In the ultimate analysis it is a process of merging of a fraction into totality.

Ego is one of the four unmanifest internal organs of the human body. It is the principle that creates exclusiveness or individuality—

egoism or 'mine' ness in every perception, action, object or feeling. By drawing upon the store-house of consciousness it feeds the intellect with past imprints and sets in motion various activities through the instruments of senses. It has two segments 'I' and 'Mine' which manifest as power and possession of things. Aggressiveness and possessiveness are its features and they trigger off six temperaments: (i) desire, (ii) anger, (iii) miserliness, (iv) sexual passion, (v) inferiority-superiority complex and (vi) vengeance. These bind the individual soul to the wheel of births and deaths. It is a 'Tamas' i.e. a predominating veil lying between the individual soul and the Supreme state.

Ego has a unique and valuable function to perform. It shows the relationship of the conscious principle and the individual soul in the form of reflection and the object reflected. The individual soul thus realises himself as the effulgent knowledge and consciousness. When the ego is still, it brings about cessation of the functions of consciousness and the life-force, thereby it became a means to establishment of the Self in its permanent abode. Beyond this it leads to understanding of the casual Sakti and realisation of Siva through the form of awareness of existence alone. Sāmbhavi is the state of consciousness when the Absolute state devoid of any differentiation has been attained. This is known as exchanging the ego for the Self-realisation (Sāmbhavi) with the Lord (Sambhu). It is the complete identification of the self with the universal being in its indeterminate Absolute state.

64

I have in this way paid obeisance to Siva-Sakti by going into and getting absorbed in them, as the core of a plantain stalk merges in

Note: The process of going into anything and identifying with itself demands a special technique known as 'Samāvesa' in the Siddha practice. The process of merging of the plantain's inner space with the outer space of the sky is known as 'Rambhā Garbha' technique. It is the process of peeling off the various sheaths of the stalk one by one. The inside space has no function to perform in this process of merging. It is so gradual, natural and unconscious that one begins to wonder how it has happened when the last sheath automatically comes off.

A human being has also similarly various sheaths to be peeled off. Behind the gross physical form there are numerous finer and still finer forms of existence. The outmost form is the gross-body, behind which there exist the astral body and the causal body. Besides the three outer forms there are innumerable others which are so fine and subtle that

thinkers do not call them bodies but only as fine coverings round the soul.

The various schools of Yoga follow different techniques of piercing these sheaths and gradually merging into 'Chit-ākāsh', 'Boodha-ākāsh', and 'Mahā-ākāsh'.

The following are the techniques of *Samāvesa*:

1. *Ānava*—To chant loudly the name of a thing and concentrate mentally on its form, colour, qualities and volume.
2. *Sākta*—without chanting the name to think consciously of a thing.
3. *Sāmbhava*—mental thinking of a thing under the continuous guidance of the worthy preceptor.

The following are the four stages of gradual merging into Siva:

1. *Mukti*—getting free from the bondage of the body.
2. *Laya*—a saturated state of absorption in the Absolute.
3. *Sārupya*—a state of settledness in the Absolute.
4. *Sāyujya*—this is also known as Sāmbhava or Paramapada. It is a finer state where the awareness of the state of merging and identicality also become extinct.

This is the 'Amrit' state which Jnānadeva gained through the grace of his illustrious Master Nivrittinātha.

CHAPTER II

गुरुस्तवन

In Praise of the Preceptor

1

Now, who is the spring to the garden of endeavours, a sacred marriage thread of the Brahmic Lore, which, although formless, has assumed the form of personified mercy,

2

Who out of compassion runs to the rescue of the Pure Consciousness whirling wretchedly as individual beings in the forest of ignorance,

3

Who kills the elephant in the form of illusion and serves the delicacy prepared from the pearls of liberation—to such a worthy preceptor Nivrittinātha, I bow.

Note: The above three verses highlight the important role which a worthy preceptor plays in the spiritual development of his disciples. As the trees and plants start flowering and blooming with the advent of the spring season similarly under the guidance of the preceptor the progress of the disciple is quickened.

In the spiritual development the three factors, viz., guidance of a worthy preceptor, thorough understanding and knowledge of scriptures and self-efforts are considered to be important. Under the Siddha system various practices such as Ānava, Sākta and Sāmbhava are recommended; but the final stage of complete identification with the Reality is possible only through the grace of the preceptor.

A lineage of worthy preceptors ensures continuity in transmitting the spiritual knowledge and instructions from one generation to another. Hence the chain of preceptors is compared to an auspicious chain (*mangalsutra* or *āhevatantu*) worn by ladies at the time of marriage

which is supposed to bestow continuous conjugal happiness to the couple.

An individual soul is part and parcel of the Ātman, i.e. the Pure Consciousness entangled in the whirlpool of worldly activities due to his past imprints and false perceptions. The preceptor removes these delusions and brings the disciple out of the thick wood of ignorance thereby putting an end to the disciple's woes and miseries created in the viscious cycle of birth and death.

Illusion is compared here to an elephant. It is believed that in the temple of an elephant precious pearls are found. The preceptor kills that illusion, takes out the pearls of wisdom and offers them on a platter like a sweet-dish for the disciples to gratify themselves.

(From verse 4 up to verse 21, how the preceptor helps the disciple in his spiritual progress is explained in detail. He acts as a guide, assists him by monitoring his practices, takes great care to see that the disciple does not slip. He showers favours on him and hastens his progress. He transmits cosmic energy into the disciple by words or looks, develops his understanding, and helps consolidation and integration of knowledge gained from time to time; he is also a hard task-master to ensure that the student rigidly follows the instructions; at the same time he is very kind and offers personal services to him. These are the various modalities of training with which the preceptor in the good old days was familiar.)

4

By his slight glance, the fetters get loose and the learned one (who has lost the state of his self) knows (his real state).

Note: The fetters are in the form of coverings such as forgetfulness of one's primal state, past imprints of actions and undue attachment to materials attracting senses. When they are loosened by the preceptor the individual comes to realise his real state.

5

While giving in charity gold in the form of liberation he makes no distinction between great and small. He is a guide to show the seer what should be seen (i.e. his real self).

6

In point of power he surpasses the greatness of Siva even and is

(as it were) the mirror in which the (individual) soul sees the bliss of Ātman.

Note: In all spiritual teachings the greatness of a preceptor is always emphasized; because he alone helps the disciple in attaining the highest goal of life. The absolute being formless and unmanifest it is through the agency of the preceptor that the Ātman renders assistence. In Siddha practice it is the command of Siva that there is nothing greater than the preceptor.

7

His sportive grace in the form of a full-moon brings together the scattered digits of the moon in the form of spiritual knowledge.

8

As soon as he is met, all the frantic efforts (of the disciple) cease, in the way the flowing of the Gangā in the form of activism comes to a standstill on reaching the sea.

9

In his absence, the seer assumes the forms of various objects of seeing but the moment he meets (the preceptor) the multiple appearances cease.

Note: So long as the real preceptor is not met a disciple goes on enjoying all the sense objects; but once he secures the grace of his preceptor, he is no more attracted by the objects of the world. They are as good as non-existent for him because in all of them he sees the Supreme only.

When anyone sees any object, he himself becomes the same object. This happens not only with the sight-sense but with other four sense-faculties also.

This phenomenon can be scientifically explained thus-
Whenever anything is perceived by the consciousness through any of the five senses viz., touch, hearing, sight, smell and taste coming in contact with the object, it takes form according to the pattern, precision and regularity of the object conditioned by the particular sense of contact. In every living object, by the conversion of the bio-current, a certain quantity of pressure, sound, light, smell and taste is constantly emanating through the senses. When these waves come in contact with an object, the intensity of that object in pressure, sound etc., is taken up by them.

10

The darkness (of night) in the form of ignorance (vanishes) and the blessed daylight of self-realisation spreads when in contact with the sun in the form of grace.

11

The individual soul becomes so much purified (by taking bath) in (holy) waters in the form of (preceptor's) grace that he does not permit his body to get contaminated by Siva whom he comes to regard as impure.

Note: It is believed that by taking bath in holy waters a person washes out his sins and becomes purified. The grace of the preceptor serves the same purpose. Here it is extolled by asserting that it makes the disciple more purified than Siva himself.

12

While protecting the disciple (during his spiritual evolution) he sheds off his superiority. However, his (inherent) glory as the preceptor does not forsake him.

Note: During spiritual development of a disciple, the preceptor takes so much care of him that he forgets his superior position and even attends on him like his servant. It is the constant care of the preceptor to ensure that his disciple does not slip off on the way but makes a steady progress. Ultimately the preceptor brings the disciple to his state of self-realisation and no distinction thereafter remains between the two. Just as one lamp lits several other lamps but no distinction remains between the light of the first and subsequently lighted lamps, so the preceptor and the disciple enjoy the same status. All the same, the disciple always feels indebted to his preceptor and acknowledges his greatness.

13

Solitariness being not so pleasent, under the pretence of being (dyad) a preceptor and a disciple he sees himself as the seer and the object of seeing.

Note: This verse offers a *raison d'être* for the springing up of multiplicity where there was ever-abiding one entity without a second. It felt bored to remain all alone all the time; hence he created first Sakti and then the world. Secondly, how inseperable is the relationship between the teacher and the taught is emphasized. Subsequent verses

also assert how this relationship works in practice. It may look a fossilized idea to the modern counterparts but if brought into practice, it will galvanize the whole system of education.

14

By the spraying of his grace, the advancing ignorance is made to beat a hasty retreat, resulting in (inundating the entire field) with infinite nectar of wisdom (i.e. knowledge gained by experience).

15

The knower, while embracing the objects of knowing gets swallowed by his (the preceptor's) look; all the same (his look) does not become unclean.

Note: When a disciple tries to understand the world of objects, he gets entangled in the various objects which entice his various sense faculties. The preceptor by the grace of his sight, absorbs the disciple in him i.e. he removes the disciple's sense of ego and multiplicity of the world by making him realise that the world, the disciple and the preceptor are all one. In a way the preceptor's sight eats away the being of a disciple but his eye-sight does not become dirty as a mouth becomes unclean by eating food. It remains ever pure and does not need any cleaning.

16

With his help, the individual being attains the status much above the Brahman; if he (the preceptor) remains indifferent, then even though he may be Brahman himself he goes down in status at the bottom of the status of a blade of grass.

Note: According to Siddha teachings Brahman is seventh in hierarchy with Siva at the top.

17

The labours of devotion of one, who at his command, has waved his self around him (i.e. has made a great personal sacrifice) bear fruits (in the form of spiritual results) in abundance.

18

So long as the spring season of his beautiful sight does not enter the garden of Vedic Lore, one cannot get in hands the fruit of self-realisation.

Note: It is on account of special climatic conditions of the spring that the fruits in the garden ripen. So unless the preceptor creates a suitable condition the fruit in the form of self-knowledge will not ripen however hard the disciple may try to hasten its ripening.

19

When his sharp sight pierces any appearance, it comes back (along with the appearance) and disappears in itself. He does not attribute any credit for such victory to himself.

Note: When the preceptor sees any object of seeing, he finds himself in that object and therefore, the object of seeing and the act of seeing get merged in the seer himself. This kind of experiencing non-duality is really a great achievement but he does not take any credit for that.

20

With modesty as his capital asset, wearing the ornamental robe of a preceptor he occupies that great seat of learning. He is lucky because he destroys that (ignorance) which does not exist.

21

Those who are drowning in a mirage are rescued by his solid help but those thus saved do not exist anywhere.

Note: Here with a paradoxical figure of speech, the entire process of liberation is summed up. Human beings are always making frantic efforts to derive happiness from various material objects of the world; but they find the world to be too much with them and instead of happiness they gain miseries and sorrows. This is their drowning in the water which does not exist because the world which is compared here to water is only illusory. A solid substance does not normally float on water; much less would it be of any help to anyone else in rescuing him. The paradox is that though the preceptor is solid (in knowledge) he serves as a life-boat to bring the drowning disciple ashore. The mystery of the rescue operation is that those who are saved do not come to the shore. They disappear because they become liberated souls.

22

The usual sky which being hollow accomodates all kinds of objects cannot aspire to be the sky (the preceptor) which is all solid.

Note: The former is 'Būdhākāsh' and it being hollow anything can be stuffed in it at any time; whereas the latter is 'Chidākāsh' which is filled with Pure Consciousness and is so solid that even the subtlest substance will have no place in it. It conveys that except Pure Consciousness there is nothing in existence like the universe.

23

It is through his grace that the moon and others derive their pleasant and soothing light. It is through his reflected light the sun shines.

24

Getting distressed by the limitations of the state as a being, even Siva consults this astrologer (the preceptor) for the auspicious time to regain his original status.

Note: It may be recalled that Siva in his absolute state became bored of his solitude and therefore created Sakti and subsequently the world of names and forms. Naturally in this evolutionary state there arose feelings of I-ness and Mine-ness. As a result, like an individual being, entangled in the mesh of illusion Siva had also his share of sorrows and sufferings. Like an ordinary human being, Siva approaches the astrologer to find out when his worries will be over and what could be done to overcome the present state of illusion. Suffice it to add that this elucidation is only to help the understanding of the poetic imagery contained in this verse. Really speaking the Absolute, the unmanifest form of Siva, has no such illusion of his Siva-state.

25

The moon (the preceptor) wears a mantle of her own light, indicating duality yet the moon's bare body is clearly apparent.

Note: Compare the modern see-through dress. Although it covers the body, it markedly reveals what it intends to conceal.

26

He is not seen though apparent, does not shine though full of light and is nowhere although all pervading.

27

By using expressions like 'who and that', how much data should I gather to draw conclusion about him? He does not answer to the various modes of drawing inferences.

Note: The Indian philosophers have classified proof into six categories. In order of importance they are: (*pratyakṣa*) evidence of senses, (*anumān*) guess, (*śabda*) verbal, (*arthāpatti*) inference from circumstances, (*upamā*) resemblance and (*anupalabdhi*) non-perception. All these modes fall short of assessing Him because He eludes any investigation or research.

28

He is incapable of being written in words, which become silent in his oneness; he tolerates no duality.

29

When all sorts of proof are exhausted the principle manifests itself. This great (preceptor) likes to be non-existent. That is the wonder!

Note: Usually all the modes of proof establish the real state of things or correct knowledge of things and then they disappear. Here, before confirming the existence of the preceptor, the modes of proof disappear. Thus the preceptor takes pleasure in not being made manifest by any evidence.

30

Once in a way, if somebody wants to have atleast some glimpse of him, then in his domain seeing is considered as pollution.

31

In a place like this, how can either bowing or praising take a forward step? By attaching name (Nivritti) to his person he has forsaken it.

32

In Ātman there is no attachment to Ātman then how could there be detachment. However he (preceptor) does not discard the ostentatious mantle of his name.

33

When there is nothing to be abandoned what is he going to abandon? Then why is he sticking fast to his name 'Nivritti'?

34

Has the sun ever seen darkness? Yet he is falsely accused as an enemy of darkness.

35

At his pleasure, that which is imitation becomes genuine, the dull becomes bright and what is not possible to happen happens.

36

Oh Preceptor! whatever you show through illusion you eliminate it being illusive. Your illusion-less (true) form can never be the subject of perception.

Note: On the world-stage you play different roles and therefore appear in different forms and dress. You make the spectators realise that these are the various assumed roles and not really you. Your unmasked appearance is however beyond the ken of perception.

37

Ah! you worthy preceptor Siva! what should I do in regard to your mystic aspect? You do not permit even one conclusion to be drawn about it.

38

You create various names and forms (to describe your nature) and make them all desolate (meaningless). Don't you seem to be pleased (in doing all this) by the sweet will of your authority!

39

You do not know how to maintain cordial relations except by taking life; there remains not the feeling in the servant that he has become the master.

Note: Your way of expressing love to someone is very strange. You deprive him of his limited existence in the body-form. You destroy his awareness of self as 'I am the body etc.' When you establish cordial relations with someone then he merges in you and himself becomes the master but the awareness that he has become the master does not survive. This is how the dual states of 'being (*jīva*) and Siva' or 'servant and master' do not abide.

40

As for particular names you do not bear the name 'Ātmatva' (selfness). What to say more! you don't like to be anything.

41

Neither night survives before the sun, nor salt in water or sleep in waking state.

42

The camphor articles do not survive in the flame of fire; so too, names and forms do not survive in his (preceptor's) presence.

43

If I try to prostrate at his feet he does not come forward as object of bowing. He does not fall (a victim) to pressure of distinction.

Note: He sees unity everywhere. From his point of view there is no distinction between a disciple and a preceptor; they are one and the same. There is no separate entity as a bower vis-a-vis the object of bowing.

44

The sun does not rise for himself; in that way, he does not become an object of bowing for him to bow.

45

One cannot stand in front of oneself, whatever one might do; in that way, he has lost his (own) status as the object of worship.

Note: The preceptor raises the disciple's status equal to his own leaving no distinction between the two. Therefore, when the disciple offers his worship, there is no one to accept it. He can't stand himself before him as an object of worship.

46

As there is no imprint of reflection in the mirror of the sky, he does not become the object of worship.

47

Let him not be the object of worship if he does not like to be; why should I take it amiss? But he does not allow any trace to be left of the one going to worship (him).

48

With the loosening of one single outer tuck (of a cloth worn round the waist), the other inside tucks also get automatically loosened.

Note: Once the preceptor instils in the mind of the disciple that he is not an object to be worshipped then automatically the disciple also loses his identity as a worshipper. Here the feeling that the preceptor is an object of worship is an outer tuck and when this is loosened then the inner tucks such as the act of worshipping and the feeling that I am worshipping are also loosened.

49

A reflection (in a mirror) gets lost along with the reflecting state of the original object; in that way the state of worshipping is carried away along with the worshipper.

Note: The worshipper and the act of worship both get merged in the object of worship.

50

Of what use is the vision where there is no form? Such a state of ours has come to fruition through the grace of his (preceptor's) feet.

51

The combination of the wick and the oil keeps the lotus (flame) of the lamp burning. Will that be sustained by a piece of camphor?

52

No sooner the two (camphor and fire) come in contact with each other than they both simultaneously (get consumed and) cease to exist.

Note: In the case of an oil-lamp it keeps on burning slowly for quite some time.

53

No sooner I see him than the feeling as the object of worship as also the worshipper vanishes like whatever is seen in a dream vanishes on waking.

Note: Right from the verse 49 onwards how quickly the grace of a preceptor brings to fruition the state of self-realisation in the disciple is explained by several familiar illustrations. The grace dissolves the ego of the body and makes the disciple to experience that the whole world is Brahman and nothing else. In that state, there remains no distinction between the preceptor and the disciple; as such the feeling of worshipping also does not arise.

54

Nay, I bowed down to my dear friend and preceptor leaving aside all phraseology of illusive duality.

55

What a novelty of his friendship! In him there is no awareness of oneness even, yet he has glorified the duality of preceptor and disciple.

56

How could he by himself, without anyone else, establish close relationship (of a preceptor and a disciple)? (Still more) extraordinary (thing) is that he neither exists nor does not exist.

57

He has become as spacious as sky accomodating the entire universe in it. His non-existence has likewise the same boundary (i.e. it is equally widely spread).

Note: The existence or non-existence of the universe are the two states of the Absolute. When the Absolute is manifest it is the universe and when the universe disappears it merges in the Absolute which is the unmanifest state. Both are infinite in expanse.

58

As the ocean is the base (container) which is either filled completely or difficult to fill up so in his house contradictions are (welcome) guests.

Note: The ocean is always full in the sense that when rivers and streams dry up in summer it never dries up. In contrast, it is never full when the entire water of rivers and rivulets flows into it in rainy season. So in the preceptor's house contrary notions like existence and non-existence simultaneously get royal reception.

59

There is no mutual goodwill between light and darkness. Yet in the sun they stay as sun.

Note: Knowledge and ignorance, so to say, abide in Pure Knowledge.

60

While saying one difference arises because that one exists in

plural states. However will contradictions ever go against themselves?

Note: It is true that the Absolute is one and nothing else exists but in all things in the universe right from Siva to the blade of grass He alone abides in varied forms and names. Mutually these things/objects may be contradictory. But so far as the substratum is concerned they are all one. A familiar illustration is that of earth and various earthen objects made out of it. In forms and names these earthen objects may be quite different but they are nothing else but earth only. There is no contradiction as far as the basic material is concerned.

61

Therefore the meaning of the two words, disciple and preceptor is the same i.e. the preceptor in both (forms).

62

Gold and gold ornaments both dwell in the same gold; as the moon and its light dwell in the moon itself.

63

Or the camphor and its fragrance are camphor only like sweetness and jaggery are one and the same jaggery.

64

In that way, he (the preceptor) alone abides happily as the preceptor and the disciple, though he appears in two states.

65

The face being acquainted with itself while looking into the mirror understands that the reflected face in the mirror is an illusion and not the real.

Note: The preceptor knows that the disciple is like a reflection of himself; the latter has no separate existence.

66

Just see; one sleeping in a lonely place is undoubtedly all alone but (when he wakes up) he becomes both the awakener and the awakened.

67

Just as (in the above example) the awakener and the awakened

are one and the same, likewise he is both a preceptor and a disciple. In this fashion he has established the preceptor-disciple-ship.

68

If without mirror the eye could witness the grand scene of its own meeting then I would be able to describe his sport.

69

In that way, without giving any scope for duality or causing rumpling of unity, he fosters the intimate relationship (between the preceptor and disciple).

70

Nivritti is his name; Abstention is his charisma; Nivritti is his kingdom. That is (the preceptor) Nivritti.

Note: The name (*nivṛtti*) given to the preceptor is very appropriate because in him there is total absence of active participation in the worldly life. Nivritti is his glory because his natural state of abstention supports both Pravritti and Nivritti; besides, his state of abstention is unpolluted by the properties of Pravritti and Nivritti. Further, though he is ever engrossed in assisting his disciples, he continues to remain in the state of beatitude. Thus he reigns supreme over the kingdom of peace and bliss.

71

Or else, Nivritti is not that which has emerged as relative understanding of abstention in contra-distinction to activism.

Note: It is Nivritti per se. It is not a state of comparative abstention vis-a-vis activism.

72

He is not like that Nivritti who countermines Pravritti (activism) like the day gaining ascendency by usurping the domain of darkness to self.

73

He is not like a jewel which parades its lustre on the strength of the padding (tucked beneath it to enhance its lustre). He is pure—the Lord Paramount.

74

When the moon gets nourished by putting the sky in the stomach, her body looks impressive by the moon-light.

75

In that way, Nivritti himself enjoys his abstention as the flower itself becomes a nose for smelling its fragrance.

Note: A beautiful simile expressing how the object of enjoyment transforms itself into the subject or the faculty of enjoyment. More such illustrations are found in Chapter IX.

76

Were the eye-sight to be able to turn back and see the beauty of the face, where is the need for searching a mirror frantically?

77

Or, when the night passes out and the day arrives, is the sun required to assume his status as sun?

78

Therefore, this master is assuredly not such as could be understood through knowledge or proved by evidence.

79

I have bowed at the worthy feet (of my preceptor) whose actionlessness without an iota of action is (natural and) self-evolved.

80

'Now', says Jnānadeva, 'by bowing at the feet of the worthy preceptor I have discharged the debts of four kinds of speech'.

Note: According to Siddha practice Siva is the 'Ādi Guru' i.e. the formless state of the Supreme. In this chapter basically that Ādiguru is praised. Jnānadeva has also paid high tributes to the person, Nivrittinātha who is his spiritual guide in human form.

Surrender at the feet of the preceptor is considered as the highest form of sacrifice that one should do to secure liberation. The kind of debt which Jnānadeva owed and discharged is explained in the next chapter.

In descending order of subtlety the four kinds of speech are:

1. *The Para form.* It is produced by air rising in the Mūlādhāra. It remains motionless and in its own place (*niṣpadam*).
2. *The Pashyanti form.* When the same air, proceeding as far as the navel, united with Manas, manifested in Swādhishthāna, possessing the nature of the manifested Kārya Bindu with general motion (*sāmānyaspanda*) is named Pashyanti speech.
3. *The Madhyamā form.* The same air slowly rising upward and manifested in the Anāhata, united with the understanding, possessing the nature of the manifested Nāda and endowed with special motion (*viśeṣaspanda*) is called Madhyamā speech.
4. *The Vaikhari form.* The air rising from the heart and proceeding as far as mouth, developed in the throat—Vishuddhi, articulated and capable of being heard, possessing the nature of the manifested Bīja with quite distinct articulate motion (*spaṣṭatara*) is called Vaikhari speech.

CHAPTER III

वाचाऋण-परिहार

Redeeming the debt of Speech

1

The sleep (of ignorance) of the Ātman breaks off because of their (four kinds of speech) out-cry. However, the debt is not fully redeemed since the awakening itself means sleep only.

Note: The bound Ātman (the individual soul) generally abides in the state of ignorance (sleep). A spiritual aspirant is however awakened by his spiritual guide by imparting knowledge of the ancient scriptures. Such important fundamental declarations as, 'I am not the body', 'I am Brahman', 'Thou art that', 'All indeed is Brahman', 'Pure Knowledge is Brahman' are thus understood by the disciple through actual experience and wisdom. Elaboration of these truths is termed here as the out-cry of speech. Thus disturbed in sleep the disciple is awakened. But his waking state is in no way better than sleeping state; because he continues in the state of haziness and imperfection arising out of his awareness that he is Brahman. It is a subtle ego state. The ultimate purpose of the speech is to restore the perfect awakening in the Ātman; that is to say that he should remain unaware of his Supreme state. That remaining unattained state is termed here as debt and is explained in this chapter and summed up in the end stating how Jnānadeva acquitted himself of that debt.

2

Else, the four—Parā and others, are useful for the liberation of the soul; indeed along with ignorance they destroy themselves also.

3

The hands and feet (the faculties of action) wither away along with the body; (as also) the senses with the mind; or like the net-work of rays disappears with the sun.

4

Before the sleeping time ends dreams die out; likewise these (four kinds of speech) melt in company of ignorance.

Note: The four kinds of speech die with ignorance as they are entirely dependent upon ignorance in the way dreams are dependent on sleep. In subsequent verses it is explained that they do not disappear totally. They continue to survive in subtle forms.

5

Iron which dies (through melting) lives in a liquid form as the burnt fuel is transformed into the state of fire.

6

Salt gets physically dissolved yet survives in water in the form of salty taste; sleep is destroyed but continues as the waking state. (*cf. Verses I.63 and II.41*)

7

Likewise, the four (kinds of speech) sacrifice their lives along with ignorance yet they come to life in the form of true knowledge.

Note: In fact the speech is a gross expression of knowledge-energy subsisting in a living being. Though the four kinds of speech give up their gross bodies they live in a subtle form i.e. knowledge that 'I am Brahman' etc.

8

That these four light the lamp of true knowledge by dying becomes a futile exercise for Self-Realisation.

9

Sleep in its wake brings dreams and when it leaves shows the awaker his own self. Both the aspects are thus supported by sleep.

10

In that way, ignorance in its living state gives imperfect knowledge (such as 'I am a human being etc.') and the same (ignorance) when it dies comes to life as true knowledge (such as, 'I am Brahman' etc.)

11

But whether living or dead ignorance keeps one in chains either of bondage (when it is alive) or liberation (when it is dead).

Note: When ignorance is alive it binds the individual with the false sense of ego and Reality. When it is dead it gives him liberation. In this state although he gains the true knowledge he still remains in a conditioned state as good as being in chains.

12

If liberation means bondage, what's the word liberation for? It has only false glamour in the residence of ignorance.

Note: So long as ignorance exists, liberation is considered to be the highest form of achievement in life; but once the true knowledge is gained the state of liberation loses its importance.

13

A child feels happy over a goblin's (an imaginary spectre called out to frighten children) death. For others he does not exist; therefore, who could believe in his death?

14

Can one, who considers the breaking of a non-existent pot as a great loss, be called wise?

15

Therefore, when the bondage itself is unreal, where is the scope for liberation (from unreal bondage)? Ignorance by committing suicide has however made room for it.

16

And 'Sadāsiva' in his 'Siva-sutra' has declared that 'knowledge is bondage'.

Note: The word knowledge used in Siva-sutra has a special connotation. It is not the knowledge per se but a limited (*kancuka*) knowledge of an embodied soul (*jīvātmā*). What the individual soul experiences when the mind along with the various sense faculties carries on transactions with the outside world is termed here as knowledge. This instead of assisting liberation binds the individual soul with coverings of impurities such as—*yonih*, which obstruct the comprehension of

one's own nature, *kalā*, illusions and false attraction towards material objects and *śarīra*, imprints of actions. The individual soul thus veiled in Sattva, Rajas and Tamas qualities keeps on wandering from one birth to another till such knowledge is completely burnt in the fire of yoga.

17

And that learned one of Vaikuntha (Lord Vishnu) has talked much about an individual being held in bondage of knowledge through Satva—quality (purity).

Note: In the Bhagavad Gitā, Lord Krishna (incarnation of Lord Vishnu) while describing the nature-born qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas explains that these qualities bind firmly the imperishable soul to the body; the Sattva quality makes the self identify himself with happiness and knowledge. Thus the clinging knowledge becomes the chain holding the soul in bondage.

18

But it is not because of my regard for what (Sadā) Siva or Srivallabha (Vishnu) had said that I accept (the statement that the knowledge is bondage). Even without their saying so, it is evident.

19

Should the knowledge of the (self) which is all pure need the support of another knowledge (to know)? would it not be like the sun depending on another's strength (to shine)?

20

Should the knowledge of the 'self' get applause because of another knowledge then such (former) knowledge is useless; were a lamp to require the help of another (lamp) to find it out then it is as good as having forgotten its own nature.

21

Is it ever possible that anyone, not knowing that he is with himself will find himself out by wandering from country to country?

22

Assuming that it is possible, should such a person after many days having remembered himself, say how pleased is he in finding himself out.

23

In that way, were the soul, who is knowledge incarnate, coming to know himself through knowledge, to assert that, 'I am' (the Supreme Self), that (knowledge) itself becomes a bondage.

24

That knowledge which drowns itself cannot be held in high esteem (or carrying the load of such knowledge which drowns itself is not relished). Knowledge brings about liberation provided it dissolves itself.

25

Therefore, when the individual gives up his ego state, Parā and others which are the decorations of the four bodies (gross, subtle, micro-causal and macro-causal) along with ignorance get extinguished.

26

When ignorance in the form of fire-wood, being dejected of its own body, gets up and enters the fire of knowledge, what remains in the form of ashes is enlightenment only.

27

The camphor in water does not appear even a bit different from water but remains in it by becoming fragrance.

28

Like the particles of ashes smeared on a body fall off but the whitish colour remains on it;

29

Though the water is not seen as water in a (dried up) stream it is there in the form of moisture;

30

At noon-time the shadow of a person is not seen separately but it remains at the bottom of his feet;

31

In the same way, the knowledge having consumed everything else abides in itself (the Supreme) in its natural and original state.

32

That debt of speech (knowledge stated in the earlier verse) does not get redeemed even by the death (of speech); that debt I redeemed by bowing at the feet (of my spiritual guide).

33

Therefore, Parā, Pashyanti, Madhyamā and Vaikhari should be cleared off (by discharging their debt); till then the learned continue to be ignorant.

Note: The speech is in a way our creditor; because it helps us to secure liberation. Therefore, the problem is how to pay its debt. The four kinds of speech are very much related to ignorance. By the knowledge of scriptures ignorance and speech are destroyed but like a phoenix bird they come to life in the form of knowledge. However, that knowledge continues to be ignorance because it has to depend upon another knowledge to make it realise itself. Hence that ego sense of knowledge becomes a bondage and has to be destroyed to attain real freedom. It is impossible in an ordinary course to destroy that bondage even by supreme sacrifice. This was however achieved by Jnānadeva through complete surrender to his spiritual guide.

This explains how even if the real knowledge is attained one has to completely surrender and be devoted to his spiritual guide to get dissolved in the Supreme Reality without becoming aware of it.

How mysterious is this spiritual way of discharging the debts of the creditors! The way is to annihilate them completely.

CHAPTER IV

ज्ञानाज्ञान-भेदकथन

Explaining the Difference between Knowledge and Ignorance

(*As a matter of fact, this chapter deals with the Knowledge Absolute. After describing the three stages—ignorance, knowledge and knowledge per se which is the Absolute, its special features are highlighted in a very logical style.*)

1

Now, having destroyed ignorance, the knowledge moves about without any impediment like waking state destroying sleep.

2

Or the face, having seen being reflected in a mirror experiences its oneness which was already there.

Note: The face was not aware of itself but when it looked into a mirror and saw its reflection realised its identity and felt happy like a Narcissus flower. When one looks into a mirror and sees the reflection of one's face, one does not feel that there are two different faces, one his own and the other reflected in the mirror; but he only gets confirmation that he has only one face and it was there even before looking into the mirror. In the face reflected in the mirror he experiences his own face only. In case he sees a dirty spot on the reflected face, to remove it he does not place his hand on the reflection in the mirror but on his own face only. Similarly when the Ātman experiences his own self through consciousness, he does not experience duality of the Ātman and the self perceived through consciousness but experiences non-plural Ātman only. This understanding of oneness in all is one of the basic principles of the Siddha philosophy.

3

In all possible manner, the knowledge brings about unity between

the Ātman and the universe; but it is just like a knife piercing itself.

Note: The Ātman looks through the mirror of knowledge and sees itself reflected in the form of the universe and realises that the self and the universe are one and the same. So the distinction between the Ātman and the universe stands removed; but as a matter of fact that knowledge itself is the Ātman as well as the universe. It is therefore like the knowledge gaining knowledge of the self. This is illustrated by a simile of a knife piercing itself and unintentionally getting destroyed.

4

A silk worm shuts itself in the cocoon made by itself and exposes itself to a danger of destruction to self, or a thief binds himself (in confusion) in the bundle of the stolen articles.

5

Or the fire consumes itself in the process of burning camphor, so the knowledge (destroys itself) while destroying ignorance.

Note: Actions and reactions occur as natural phenomena. Action by ignorance starts simultaneous reaction of knowledge and both of them in the ultimate analysis get dissolved in the Pure Knowledge, just as fire started to burn camphor gets itself burnt along with camphor or a thief tying himself along with the things stolen gets himself caught.

6

Having lost the support of ignorance, the knowledge expanded itself so much that it caused self-destruction.

7

When the wick (of a lamp) is on the point of extinction, the lamp flame becomes brighter just indicating that its end is near.

8

Who could know when the breasts (of a woman) fall or rise or when a jasmine flower blooms or withers?

Note: Both actions are so quick in succession that it is impossible to differentiate between the two states; so also the expansion of knowledge and its extinction occur almost simultaneously.

9

The formation of a ripple itself means its subsidence; the flash of

lightning is its extinction;

10

In that way the knowledge quaffs off ignorance and grows so fat that it leads to its destruction.

Note: Cf. verse IV.6.

11

Just as the deluge at the time of the dissolution of the world submerges land and water totally leaving no boundary limits of the two.

12

Or when the orb of the sun expands beyond the universe the brilliance and darkness become the same (brilliance).

13

Or having destroyed sleep the near-waking state subdues itself and assumes a condition of total waking.

14

In that manner, having destroyed ignorance knowledge expands and swallows both ignorance and knowledge and becomes the Pure Knowledge (per se).

15

At that time (when knowledge turns into the Pure Knowledge as explained above) it shines like the moon in her seventeenth digit when it is neither full of light as on the full-moon day nor totally dark as on the new-moon day.

Note: Each phase of the waxing and waning of the moon continues for fourteen days; one day is a full-moon day; one day is a new-moon day. That cycle continues every month. These sixteen phases appear on the surface of the moon and the surface-base is regarded as the seventeenth phase; its lustre remains constant throughout.

In the terminology of Siddha practice there are sixteen usual phases which are named differently. The seventeenth phase is known as, 'Amrit or Nivritti Kalā'.

16

The sun who is never out-shined by any brilliance and never

defiled by the splashing of darkness can be appropriately compared with him alone.

17

Therefore, the Pure Knowledge is one by itself; it is not like the one which can be illumined by another knowledge or can be darkened by ignorance.

18

Yet, can the Pure Knowledge which is one by itself be conscious of itself? Can the eye-ball see itself?

19

Can the sky enter into itself or fire burn itself? Or can anyone climb on his head?

20

Can the vision view itself or the taste, taste itself or the sound hear its own sound?

21

Can the sun light itself or the fruit grow upon itself or the fragrance smell itself?

22

In that way, the knowledge does not know itself. Therefore, it is the Pure Knowledge which is unique by itself in that it is without being aware that it is knowledge.

23

Were the knowledge (to be) such as could bear to be called as knowledge then that would be ignorance in the form of knowledge.

Note: If the knowledge remains conscious because it is termed as knowledge there it is ignorance only; in other words the knowledge which becomes aware of itself through the instrument of the word knowledge, it is not self-illumined; hence it is ignorance.

24

Just as what is light is certainly not darkness; then of what use is light to itself?

25

In that way, He (the Supreme) has not to become 'to be or not to be'. By such talk He may appear to be false.

Note: Since the Supreme is beyond the states of existence or non-existence one is likely to infer from such statements that He is imaginary or false.

26

Even if the real state is that there is nothing whatsoever who has that knowledge that there is nothing?

27

On whose authority the proposition that there is nothing stands established? It is an uncalled for imputation to the Supreme.

Note: If the existence of the Supreme, which is the substratum of knowledge of all the things in the universe, is denied or refuted in protest then wherefrom and to whom the ideas such as, 'knowledge does not exist' or 'everything is zero and void' can occur? Because, before such ideas could occur to any one, he must have the knowledge and experience of such phenomena; but if knowledge does not exist then the eventuality of occurence of such ideas is out of consideration. Having assumed that knowledge does not exist, it is ridiculous to declare that one has the knowledge of its non-existence. It is as quixotic as someone saying that he has no tongue in the mouth, when his saying so would not have been possible without having a tongue.

28

After putting out a lamp if the extinguisher simultaneously disappears with light, who will have the idea that there was no light?

29

Or were one while falling asleep to pass away who could then know that he had a sound sleep?

30

A pot (which exists) can be seen as a pot or if it is broken its broken state can be seen but when there is complete absence who will talk about it?

Note: If someone is present who has seen the pot and its absence

on its breaking he can talk about its existence as well as non-existence. In the case of the Pure Knowledge when there is entirely nothing, no one else to witness or experience then who can vouchsafe for its existence or non-existence?

31

Therefore, the Pure Knowledge does not perceive its states of existence or non-existence. Its existence is without the states of existence and non-existence.

32

But because that Pure Knowledge is not a subject (either for perception or realisation) to self or others is it a valid ground to hold its non-existence?

33

One sleeping in solitude (in a forest) is not seen by anyone and if his remembering faculty has gone off,

34

then it is not that he is not alive; such is the absolute existence (of that knowledge) which brooks no talk of either affirmation or negation.

35

When the vision turns inwards there is a temporary break in its seeing function but it does not mean that it is not there. It does exist in its knowing state.

36

A person of dark complexion standing in darkness is not visible to himself or others. Yet he knows full well that he is very much there.

37

His existence or non-existence is not like that of a person (something seen at a distance looks like a person but one is not sure whether that object is a person or something else like a pole). His existence abides in his own place.

38

The form of the sky becomes rarefied when it becomes absolutely

clear (when all other elements merge in it). To a viewer it becomes invisible (being all hollow) although it exists in its natural state.

39

The well having crystal clear water looks dry but there is nothing else except the water.

Or

Even though the pure water in a well gets dried up, it is entirely there in the form other than water i.e. in the form of moisture.

Note: Cf. verse III.29.

40

In that way, from the point of view of the Absolute it abides in its natural state giving up notions of existence or non-existence.

41

It is such a waking state that there is no awareness of the sleep. It is so thorough a state that there is no awareness even of wakeful condition.

42

When a jar is on the ground, it is known as the ground with a jar; with its removal the ground is known as without a jar.

43

But when both these actions (jar's placement and removal) do not touch the ground it remains all pure and fine. So is the state of the Absolute.

CHAPTER V

सच्चिदानंदपदत्रयविवरण

Explanation of the three words Existence, Knowledge and Bliss

1

The Supreme (Sat-Chit-Ānanda) is a triad of existence, knowledge and bliss; However, understand that they are missing in it: like the poison is not in the poison.

Note: Existence, knowledge and bliss are the words used collectively to describe the Supreme or the Absolute. In this verse their synonyms are used which mean power, light and happiness. They are well understood by people with everyday experience. What is emphasised here is that the word 'Sat-Chit-Ānanda' does not fully depict the Supreme because in the Supreme they do not exist, just as the toxicity does not exist in poison so far as its effect on the poison is concerned. It kills one who takes it but it does not kill the poison itself. This is further explained up to verse 19. In subsequent verses how the three qualities get dissolved in the Supreme without leaving any trace in it is indicated by several familiar illustrations.

2

Lustre, hardness and yellowness together constitute gold, as viscosity, sweetness and mellifluity constitute milk.

3

Whiteness, fragrance and softness are not three different qualities; they appear in the form of one camphor.

4

The whiteness of its body, nay, its whiteness is its softness or both of them are not there, it is only fragrance alone.

5

In this way, the three attributes are amalgamated in camphor. In the same way existence etc. are fused (into one Supreme).

6

As a matter of fact, the three words, 'Sat, Chit and Ānanda' continued to have their own distinct existence but that blissful (the Supreme which is above words) made them deficient (to continue to remain separate).

7

Existence itself means bliss and knowledge, (or) the knowledge itself means existence and bliss. These cannot be distinguished from each other in the way, sweetness cannot be distinguished from nectar.

8

The sixteen phases of the moon go on waxing during the first fortnight (of the lunar month); yet the moon is as it is, in itself a perfect whole.

9

When rain water is falling in drops, it could be counted by drops; however, on the spot where it falls, it is all water only (it cannot be counted there).

10

In that way, the Vedās have called it 'Sat' (existence) to exclude 'Asat' (non-existence) and 'Chit' (knowledge) to end (confusion in being compared with) (ignorance) 'Jada'.

Note: The two words 'Sat' and 'Chit' do not convey any basic properties of the Supreme as explained later on but they are used to remove confusion which arises in comparing it with the known world which is non-existant and gross.

11

'What remains after the total destruction of pain is pleasure'; so declared the Vedās born from the breath of the Lord.

12

In this way, 'Sat and others' while pushing out their competitors, 'Asat and others' lost their own strength.

13

Thus the word 'Sat-Chit-Ānanda' as applied to Ātman (the self) does not really represent it. It is to establish its differentiation from other attributes such as 'Asat', 'Jada' and 'Dukha' (i.e. non-existence, grossness and misery).

14

Can the material world which becomes visible by the light of the sun make it (the sun) visible?

15

Similarly how can it be that (the faculty of) speech which derives its knowledge of the subject from the knowledge (of the Supreme) be able to enlighten (to talk about) the Supreme?

16

That which is not demonstrable cannot be a topic for discussion. Since it (the Supreme) is self-enlightened does it require any proof?

17

Proof has existence only when it is distinct from the principle. What locus standi proof can have with reference to the object (principle) which is self-established?

18

Thus, were one to seek to know the Supreme, which is in fact the knowledge itself, where could there exist anything like the state of knowing and the knower.

19

Therefore, the words 'Sat', 'Chit' and 'Sukha' are not the words which appropriately represent the object (the Supreme). This is the conclusion of all the thinking (on the subject).

20

In this way the three words continue to gain publicity till they in mutual concord meet the observer (the Supreme),

Note: That which cannot be established by any mode of evi-

dence cannot be expressed or described in words. Therefore, the Supreme cannot be described by words like 'existence, knowledge and bliss'. These words do not actually mean the Supreme but only lead one to the destination where it can be found. In tracing out a thief as well as the stolen articles the foot-prints as well as some indications and signs available on the path are useful but once the articles are traced out, no body is interested in turning back and looking at those signs, for it would be futile to do so; so having merged into the Supreme, the words 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' lose any significance whatsoever.

21

(Then just as) the clouds disappear after showers or streams stop flowing after merging into the sea or the path ends after reaching the destination;

22

(Or) a flower withers giving rise to a fruit and the fruit crumples after yielding juice and the juice also disappears after giving satisfaction (to a drinker);

23

(Or) the hand withdraws after offering the oblations into fire and the melody stops after transporting the audience into the state of ecstasy;

24

(Or) just as the mirror disappears after showing reflection to the face or the awakener leaves after waking one (who is) asleep;

25

In the like manner the three words, 'Sat', 'Chit' and 'Ānanda' after manifesting the real nature of the object of seeing (viz. 'Satchidānanda, the Ātman) to the seer, take to the path of silence (observe complete silence).

26

Whatever is said about it (the Supreme) it is not that and whatever it is, cannot be said, in the way, one cannot measure one's height by measuring one's shadow;

27

As he proceeds (to measure the shadow) realising that it is not possible to measure himself by shadow and becomes mindful of himself and feels ashamed and cuts short the measuring activity (realising the futility of his action).

28

In the same way, (the Supreme) is by nature ever existent and it is not 'Asat' (non-existent); how could then there be any existence to it?

29

And that state of 'Chinmātra' (pure consciousness alone) was attained through destruction of 'Achit' (insentient); how could that state of 'Chinmātra' be in the 'Chinmātra' (in the absence of 'Achit')?

30

There exists neither sleep nor feeling of waking in the fully awakened state; such is the condition of 'Chinmātra'. What is the point in calling it 'Chinmātra'?

31

In a blissfull condition there is verily no sorrow at all. What is the good of reckoning such bliss as bliss?

Note: Cf. with verse V.11.

32

Therefore 'Sat' made exit along with 'Asat', 'Chit' set along with 'Achit' and 'Sukha' disappeared along with 'Asukha'; then there remained nothing behind (but the Supreme).

33

Now putting aside the mantle of different false pairs of opposites and taking off the two-fold garment of distinction, it abides in the pristine state of bliss alone.

34

(When one starts counting) counting as one also involves another one taking the count; therefore, it (the Supreme) is one above the counting (exclusively one though not in numerical terms).

35

Similarly one emerging out of happiness may become happy with that happiness; but the Supreme is happiness alone therefore who else can experience that happiness?

Note: If there are two separate entities, such as one the enjoyer of happiness and the other is happiness itself, the enjoyer can say that he has enjoyed happiness. In the case of the Supreme he himself is happiness and there is no one else to enjoy it.

36

In the accompaniment of the beating of a drum the Goddess enters the body of her devotee but if there is a drum only and no one else then who will enter and into whom?

Note: In some temples, when the drums are beaten and proper rituals are performed the deity of a temple is believed to enter the body of her sincere devotee and through him she bestows boons to the supplicants.

37

In this way, (the Supreme) being itself happiness, it cannot experience happiness. However, on that count it cannot be that it does not know happiness.

38

Without looking into the mirror the face is neither in the front or the back of it. (It is at its own place in one position). Just the same way, Bliss is devoid of either happiness or sorrow.

39

The scintillating exposition of all the theories (propounded about the Supreme) has to be discarded like incoherent utterances in a dream. He dwells stealthily in himself and remains obscure.

Note: The Supreme is incomprehensible even to Himself; therefore, how can anyone else have His perfect grasp or understanding! Naturally all the theories and inferences about Him by others are inadquate to offer His total view. Hence they have to be discarded.

(From this verse onwards up to verse 52 how the Supreme exists without duality in its primal unmanifest state is illustrated by examples such as the enjoyer and the act or object of enjoying.

sugarcane juice and its sweetness, honey and bee etc., inter-dependent things like beauty and form, mind and sexual impulse etc.)

40

The unplanted sugarcane alone knows the sweetness of its juice;

41

The sound of an unstruck lute which is inaudible has to become the hearer of itself;

42

Before honey is formed inside the flower, it has to become a bee (to enjoy it by sucking);

43

Anyone else will not be capable of examining how sweet is the food which is not cooked;

44

In that way, the happiness which feels shy to come forward and enjoy its own happiness, how could anyone else be able to enjoy?

45

(Or) when the moon is in the sky at noon-time the existence of moon-light can be known by the moon only;

46

Beauty when there is no form, youth in the absence of a body and meritorious deed without commencement of action (like these the Supreme exists);

47

Like the sexual intoxication appearing before the mind comes into being (the unmanifest Supreme happens to assume manifested form).

48

The music alone can discuss about music so long as the world of various musical instruments is not born;

49

Or as the fire after its contact with firewood ceases (i.e. when it burns the entire firewood) keeps contact with its body only (such is the case with the Supreme.

50

Those who can enjoy the beauty of their face without the aid of the mirror can alone realise the secrets of the self-evident Supreme.

51

This explanation is simple enough to understand; having a crop without sowing means it is already stored in a cornbin.

52

So there exists nothing neither common nor uncommon in the Supreme. It ever enjoys itself all alone.

Note: In the earlier two verses while describing the nature of the Supreme one common and the other uncommon feature were illustrated. Usually to enjoy the beauty of one's own face one is required to look into a mirror but the Supreme does not require any such aid to enjoy itself. This is an uncommon feature. On the other hand, that the seeds before they are sown contain the future harvest is a very common illustration to understand. In the same way the Supreme contains in itself the seed of the entire expansion of the universe. Though these are the two common and special features of the Supreme it transcends them both.

53

Now it would be wise to say, whatever remains to be said hereafter would mean drinking hard to the last drop of water (i.e. to observe complete silence).

54

It was established by argument that the proof is unreliable (to prove the Supreme). Similarly illustrations took an oath not to make any appearance (to give evidence on the Supreme).

Note: Cf. verses II.27 & V.16.

55

All the explanations, having become void (in their attempt to

establish the Supreme) made their physical exit; while all those who came to identify rose up in rows (knowing their futility) and left.

56

All efforts, realising their futility, made quick about-turn while settled principles gave up following past experience (precedence).

57

Here the thinking faculty by sacrificing itself proved faithful to the established conclusions as a valiant soldier does by giving up his life when his master is in danger.

58

The faculty of understanding (in trying to know the Supreme) feeling ashamed to be called understanding committed suicide. The experience remaining alone here felt handicapped.

59

As the body of a piece of talc is destroyed when all its layers are peeled off,

60

when the stalk of a plantain tree feeling roasted on account of heat removes all its coverings (sheaths) it is not able to stand erect,

61

in that way, when the experience which is inclusive of the two viz. the experiencer and the object of experience, disappears what mutual relationship does there exist among themselves?

62

As stated earlier where the experience itself has no *locus standi*, of what use is the legion of words? (Words could have been needed only if there had been experience to describe).

63

Where Parā (the subtlest form of speech) is silenced there would not arise any vibration of sound; how could then the lips move about in that place (to express)?

64

Having awakened, what is the good of talking about waking? Will one whose hunger is fully gratified go in for cooking food!

65

Once the sun rises lamps take rest; when the field is full of harvest does anyone think of ploughing a field?

66

Therefore, the pretext of freedom and bondage is over and the work has come to an end; the appreciation of the sermon remains (to be done by words).

67

(Besides) if the thing (the Supreme) slips out of hands due to forgetfulness of self or others, it is the word alone which can recapture it by remembrance.

68

Although the word, serving as reminder, parades its glory in the world, it has no virtue besides this (to boast of).

CHAPTER VI

शब्दखंडन

Disproving the Word

1

Hail to the useful thing the 'word', celebrated as the donor of remembrance! Is it not a mirror that shows clearly the formless Supreme?

Note: The word is sound which in turn is a wave. It is a sound pattern having a particular shape, quality and radiation determined by the characteristics of a thing or a person producing it. The words have certain established meanings and represent certain things, objects and ideas as conventionally decided upon by the people for the sake of facilitating communication; when any word is uttered it puts the hearer in the mind of the thing or object or idea represented by it; as such the word acts as a remembrancer.

2

There is absolutely no wonder that one which is visible is seen in a mirror; however, a mirror of the word makes visible which is not visible.

3

Like the sun, it (the word) is the illuminator of the descendants (the universe of forms and names) of the ancient unmanifest family (of *Śiva* and *Śakti*). Because of its one quality (sound) alone, the sky has been called 'Ambara' (a container of sounds).

Note: Anything and everything in the universe is understood by the words only. The words throw light even on those things or objects which are incomprehensible and unmanifest. The dissertation on hand is the best testimony of it. The sky has no form whatsoever but the sound quality of the word has made it perceptible through the faculty of hearing.

4

The word itself is a flower of the sky (non-existent), yet it bears the fruit of the universe. What is there immeasurable which cannot be measured by the word?

5

It is a torch which shows the way to what is to be done and what is forbidden. It is the arbitrator in disputes between bondage and freedom.

6

When it takes sides with ignorance, it makes the non-existing (world) to appear as real and the real thing (the Supreme) does not fetch even three cowries (the smallest legal tender then prevalent).

7

This child 'the word' like an exorcist has made the state of being to enter Pure Śiva.

Note: The Supreme reveals itself as the universe consisting of several individual entities. The Upaniṣads declare that the universe was created by the Supreme through the word 'Om' which was the initial state (child state) of the word. The three syllables which constitute this word represent the gross, subtle and causal states of the world. All have emanated from Pure Śiva. It is believed that an exorcist by chanting some Mantrās makes the evil spirit enter into the body of a person possessed by it, makes it talk about the cause of its possession and then threatens the spirit to leave the body and thus the evil spirit stops haunting the person. Similarly the word causes the Ego state to enter Pure Śiva and holds him in bondage. Later on the word, i.e. the knowledge of scriptures brings back to him the state of freedom.

8

The soul which is imprisoned in the body is released by the word and the Ātman is made to see his own self through the word.

9

The sun as he proceeds to bring out the day incurs the wrath of the night (as the former destroys the latter). Therefore, the sun cannot be used as a simile to describe the word.

Notes: Cf. verse II.59.

10

Activism and abstention (the two aspects of life) which are opposed to each other go hand in hand with the help of the word alone.

Note: Cf. verses II.32 and II.71. The two styles of life—Pravritti (engaging oneself in activities which lead to material pleasures) and Nivritti (engaging oneself in activities which lead to spiritual progress and experience of bliss) are opposed to each other. The former is very natural, the latter requires special efforts; both are poles asunder; but if one follows 'the word'—the guidelines given in the scriptures,—then both the styles go hand in hand and one can achieve both mundane and spiritual goals.

11

It (the word) makes its own sacrifice in order to assist the knowledge of the Supreme. To what extent to extol the word?

12

Nay, the word though famous as a reminder (of the Supreme) has no kinship with the Supreme.

13

The Ātman has absolutely no use of the word. How does the self-conceived Ātman (all eternal knowledge) need the obligation of anyone?

14

Whether remembered or forgotten or visible as an object, the soul is only one substance without a second.

15

How can one remember or forget oneself? Can the tongue have taste or no taste of the tongue itself?

16

One fully awake cannot have sleep. How can there be the feeling of being awake? In that way, there is neither remembrance nor forgetfulness with the Substance (the Supreme).

Note: In between the states of sleep and awaking there is a

border line state of half waking of the shortest duration. This state is called the foundation of Yoga. For detailed information about this state see Chapter VII, verses 185 to 191.

17

The sun knows no night; how can he then know the day? In that way, the Ātman abides without either remembrance or forgetfulness.

18

In short, where there is neither remembrance nor forgetfulness what is the need of a remembrancer? Therefore in this place the word has nothing to do.

19

One more good purpose is really served by the word; but one does not muster courage to think of it.

20

One who says that the word destroys ignorance and then the Ātman reveals itself, would be (labelled as having gone) mad.

21

That the sun first destroys night and then makes his appearence—such a rubbish talk will not be tolerated in the clean city of truth.

22

Is there such a sleep which feels annoyed by the state of awakening? Is there any process of waking which wakes up one who is already awake?

Note: This illustration has a reference to the earlier two verses. It can't be said that the Supreme which is Pure Knowledge, first destroys ignorance and then makes its appearance; because the ignorance does not exist for destruction. Since it is an ever awakened (knowledge) state, it would be meaningless to say that the Supreme is awakened from sleep.

23

Therefore, there is in fact neither ignorance for destruction nor any such substance as the Ātman that can enter its state.

24

The state of ignorance is really like that of a child being born of a barren woman. What could then be cut into pieces by an axe of logic?

Notes: Since ignorance is nonexistent it cannot be dissected for purpose of analysis to determine its character by logical way of thinking. When there is no thinking process, words will not serve any purpose; hence the observation in verse 19 above.

25

Had the rainbow any real existence as it looks, could not any archer have tied a string to it (to use it as a bow)?

26

Had the mirage (water) sufficed to display the feat of sipping by the sage Agasti then the logic of thinking would have beaten hollow the ignorance.

27

Had there been ignorance in the world which could bear the onslaught of the word then why should not the real fire be able to consume the celestial city of Gandharvas?

28

Darkness does not stay when it comes in contact with light. Then what is there for the light to extinguish?

29

Or if someone longs for a lamp to see the day that would be a futile business.

30

Nothing is traced on the spot where no shadow falls, to the same extent nothing is discovered on the spot even where the shadow falls.

31

In a waking state one knows that the dream was false (though a dreamer during the dream feels it to be real). Likewise (when knowledge comes, one realises that) there exists no ignorance even in the state of ignorance.

32

Is there anything special, in somebody having houseful of fictitious jewellery created by a magician or if such a person is robbed of all such jewellery by plundering

Note: The second line of the verse can also be rendered thus—if a naked person is plundered.

33

Were one to eat lakhs of imaginary dainties, what else would it amount to except total fasting!

34

It may be all dry where there is no mirage; but could there be any moisture where there is mirage?

35

If it (the ignorance) really existed as it appears to be, then men, rice-fields and lakes would all be overfull with rain water in the picture.

36

Had it been possible to write letters with a solution of darkness it would be waste of efforts to prepare ink.

37

Do not the eyes see that the sky is blue (it is really not what it appears to be)? Understand the false (mischievous) appearance of ignorance in the same way.

38

In a very innocent manner the ignorance goes on telling, 'I do not exist as the name (Avidyā) indicates'.

39

And secondly by swearing (saying in the precincts of a temple) before God that it is indescribable the ignorance has proved its non-existence.

40

For, if it (ignorance) does exist, why cannot it stand determina-

tion by appearing before reason? The floor will have some mark if the jar happens to be on it.

Note: If a thing exists then it will leave some sign on the spot where it exists; therefore, unless by the process of reasoning it is proved that ignorance exists there is no point in looking for any signs about its existence.

41

It is not a finding of the intellect that the Ātman destroys ignorance and reveals himself. He is like the sun who has no darkness (to destroy before revealing himself).

Note: Ignorance is not like a crust over the body of the Supreme, needing destruction for the Supreme to reveal himself just as the sun is not covered by darkness. In fact the sun has nothing to do with darkness. It would be very illogical to say that the thing which does not exist is destroyed.

42

Afterall, the ignorance is illusive; not only that it hides its illusiveness. Its non-existence is thus proved to be true.

43

Thus in many ways it has been shown that ipso facto ignorance has no existence. Against whom then would the word raise its hand (for striking)?

44

Were the shadow to be forcefully struck with an iron bar, the bar itself would dash against the ground or were one to slap the sky the hand itself would suffer dislocation.

45

Drinking the mirage (water), or embracing the sky-cavity or kissing the reflection-

46

excitement (to do such activities) would wear out and all efforts would go waste; likewise becomes the state of rational thinking in trying to destroy ignorance.

47

Were one to devote one's life-time to destroy ignorance, any attempt in that direction would be like peeling off the bark of the sky-cavity;

48

(Or like) drawing milk from the nipple hanging from the neck of the he-goat, or finding the way through the sockets of the knees or preparing dried wafers from (the tubers of) the evening time;

49

(or like) squeezing ample juice by pounding yawning and feeding the torso with that juice mixed with laziness.

50

(Or like) reversing the water current in the channel, or turning over the shadow, or twisting the fibres of the wind into a rope;

51

(or like) killing the goblin or stuffing the reflection in a pillow-cover, or feeling pleasure in combing the hair on a palm;

52

(or like) breaking the non-existing pot, or plucking the flowers of the sky, or breaking with ease the horns of a hare;

53

(or like) preparing ink from camphor, or collecting lamp-black from a gem-lamp, or happily performing marriage of the child of a barren woman,

54

(or like) feeding the Chakor of the nether world (Pātāla) with the nectar of the moon on a new-moon day, or straining out small amphibious creatures from the mirage (water).

55

To what extent to expatiate on this subject? The ignorance is made up of non-existence; how can it be destroyed by words?

56

The words cannot gain the status of 'evidence' by destroying that which does not exist, in the way, the darkness has no appearance in darkness.

57

Ignorance has no form. To say anything about it, no ingenuity will be useful like a lamp lit in the court-yard at noon (is not useful).

58

Those going for harvesting without sowing the field, what else would they derive but the feeling of shyness.

59

One who has wrapped up his body with nakedness would have done well to sit at home doing nothing.

60

Is it of any use in having rains where there is water? Similarly diffusion of light of words will be of no avail in destroying ignorance.

61

Measure is praiseworthy till it seeks to measure the sky-cavity. The existence of a lamp is vain if it could make darkness visible.

Note: Measure plays a very important function in day-to-day life; but if it starts measuring the size, quantity or weight of the sky it will be an exercise in futility. Similarly the purpose of a lamp would not be served if it starts showing darkness because its real purpose of spreading light and making objects visible will not be fulfilled.

62

Should the tongue taste the sky-dainties, its name, 'taster (rasanā)' would be simply a name (redundant).

63

Could the wife-hood (state of a husband being alive) have any glory if the husband is not alive? Eating the core of a plantain tree means not eating at all.

64

Does not the sun shed light on either gross or subtle objects? Yet, does he not become useless in the case of night?

65

What is there that cannot be seen by the vision? Yet, it is unable to see sleep since it cannot be had by one who is awake.

66

Were the Chakor to search for the moon during day-time, it would mean the extreme limit of futility of that search.

67

A reader becomes dumb if a blank print (paper) is put before him or a walker is rendered crippled if he were to ascend the sky-cavity.

68

If the words were to get ready to demolish ignorance in confrontation it would be a meaningless chatter.

69

Should the moon rise on a new-moon's day, will it do any harm to darkness! Such becomes the state of reason (words) in point of destroying ignorance.

70

Were one to take a meal which is not prepared, it means fasting only. It is plain enough as the one who sees without eye-sight is blind.

71

Were the word to (try to) convey the meaning of a thing that does not exist, it would get destroyed along with its meaning without serving any purpose.

Notes: The words fail to represent anything that does not exist; therefore, if some word is coined to convey the idea of such a thing that will not serve any purpose.

72

Now, should it be said that ignorance does not exist? Nothing

remains of the word itself in trying to destroy (ignorance).

73

Therefore, were the reason (word) to confront ignorance to destroy it, it will only bring on its own destruction.

74

The death of ignorance would have established the credibility of the word as proof; but the ignorance because of its non-existence does not permit that to happen.

75

To say that the word will attain importance by displaying the Ātman its own self is something impossible.

76

Is there any country where a person gets married to self? Is there any eclipse in which the sun eclipses himself?

77

(Or, has it happened that—) the sky proceeds to meet itself, or the sea rushes unto itself, or a palm (of hand) touches itself?

78

(Or) the sun causes itself to rise, or a fruit bears another fruit, or smell enjoys its own fragrance?

79

It may be possible instantly to make all the animate and inanimate objects to drink water but can water be made to drink itself?

80

Is there a single day among three hundred and sixty days (of the year), when the sun could see himself with his own eyes?

81

When the God of destruction gets angry he will burn the three worlds; but beyond that can he burn the fire itself?

82

Has even the God Brahmā (the creator of the world) any means to stand before himself without a mirror?

83

Can the vision enter itself, or can the taste taste itself, or can one who is awake awake himself? It has not happened.

84

How can it be that the sandal-wood should apply its paste to itself, or the colour paint itself, or a pearl wear its own lustre!

85

How could it happen—gold testing its own-fineness, or the lamp lighting its own light, or liquidity merging into liquid state!

86

The Lord (Śankara) held the moon on his crown (head) but can the moon hold herself on her head?

87

How can knowledge call on the Royal Ātman who is the crystallised Pure Knowledge only!

88

It is not possible to know oneself by one's own senses of knowledge in the way the eyes cannot by themselves see them.

Note: A knower can know a thing if it is other than self. In the case of the Ātman he himself is the knowledge, the knower and also the knowable thing.

89

The knowledge can know itself as the object of knowledge, only if a mirror can see itself in it.

90

The knife can rush and pierce anything beyond the visible horizon but can it pierce its own body?

Note: Cf. verse IV.3.

91

The tip of a tongue, having experienced all kinds of flavours may have become expert in tasting, but it is not able to taste itself by any means.

Note: Cf. verse VI.15.

92

On that score, has the tongue stopped its function of tasting? Not at all; it continues as it is.

93

In that way, the Ātman—"Sat-Chit-Ānanda' stands fully self-accomplished by itself. What new knowledge the word can give to Him since everything is His own only.

94

By any evidence whatsoever the Supreme does not permit himself to be proved or disproved. Being self-sufficient, in his case there is no giving or taking.

Note: All the things in the world are such that either they can be believed or taken for granted on the basis of various modes of evidence or they can be disbelieved or not accepted in the absence of evidence. The Ātman being self-established the question of either accepting or not accepting him does not arise. It is the existence-state transcending all other states.

95

Therefore, it should not be concluded that the word would attain fame by making the Ātman gain the state of Ātman.

96

A lamp lit at noon can neither shed any light nor expel darkness; such happens to be a pitiable condition of the word on both the counts.

Note: Cf. verse VI.57.

97

The ignorance being non-existent, it cannot be destroyed; and the Ātman being self-evident, what is there to be established and by whom?

98

The word thus having found not even a wee-bit scope either way (in regard to Ātman and ignorance) submerged like a stream in the flood of the deluge.

99

Now if the word has anything embodied in it it has absolutely no meaning.

Note: If the existence of words such as soul, bondage, freedom etc., has to be acknowledged then it is for their own sake only and not because they convey or represent anything. Normally when any word is heard the thing or the object which it represents is comprehended but when the thing or the object supposed to be conveyed by the meaning of the word does not exist then it conveys a distorted knowledge. From the stand point of Pure Knowledge the words mentioned above are meaningless distortions. So what is meaningless has no space to occupy.

100

It is all an empty talk about the coming of a goblin or the suspension of sky-cavity from the palm.

101

Thus the word along with its retinue has become meaningless though it looks beautiful like the object coated with colours.

102

In this way the knowledge and ignorance, the hapless ones living on the word are truely speaking like the forest in the picture.

103

With the clearing of the clouds, the bad day (consequent on a suffocating atmosphere) ends; in that way the word gets dissolved in the deluge (and along with it knowledge and ignorance also get dissolved).

Note: Like a seasoned advocate Jnānadeva makes brief introductory remarks about the word by saying some nice things about it, then he highlights its personal qualities as a remembrancer and a rescuer and finally he demolishes point by point the glamour of the word. He

points out how ineffective and meaningless the word is in destroying ignorance and establishing knowledge. Finally he points out how miserable is the lot of the hapless twins—ignorance and knowledge-who are entirely dependent upon the word and concludes that unless the use of the word is totally done away with, the entire confusion caused by ignorance and knowledge will not come to an end.

CHAPTER VII

अज्ञानखंडन

Disproving Ignorance

This chapter deals with the doctrine of ignorance. According to this doctrine, the individual soul is different from the Ātman and the material world is a reality. Here we watch the spectacular feat of the genius of Jnānadeva soaring up into the unknown space and exploring the highest point of the human evolution. We are wonder-struck by his expression because it expresses what baffles expression. We feel charmed by the spring-time natural beauty of the flowers of variegated hues in the form of figures of speech and at the same time we are amazed on seeing the scintillating intellectual fire-works reducing to ashes the edifice of various theories supporting the cause of ignorance. In that rapturous state, one is likely to get lost, missing the thought-content of the words. This is an apology to provide their assistance as a remembrancer.

Ignorance means 'knowing nothing'; but from the view-point of Knowledge, no such thing answering this description exists. The state of existence can be of two kinds; one is real and permanent existence which can abide even without the knowledge of its existence; the other is unreal and transient. A thing does not exist but there is a firm belief in the mind that it exists and as such we experience its existence. Such existence is imaginary and it disappears when the true knowledge is gained. The ignorance being the figment of our imagination, we believe its existence and ipso-facto we believe the existence of the universe as real. In fact, the universe is nothing but the play of the Ātman. It is His glory and He alone abides enjoying it.

Various view points about ignorance dealt with in this chapter are mentioned seriatim:

1. *Ignorance and knowledge both do not exist in the Ātman, though they are believed to be there along with the Ātman. Therefore, their so-called existence does not affect the Ātman (verses 1 to 7).*

2. *To say that ignorance abides in the Ātman is not true (verses 8 to 23).*

3. *That ignorance stays with the Ātman does not appeal to reason (verses 24 to 40).*

4. *On investigation of the nature of ignorance, whether its existence follows from any direct evidence or whether its existence is deducible from the results of ignorance, it is established that its existence can neither be directly proved nor deduced (verses 41 to 84).*

5. *Since the existence of the Ātman is presumed though he is incomprehensible because we see his expansion in the form of the real universe, the same logic should apply to hold that ignorance exists (verses 85 to 94). It is impossible to hold that the universe has emerged out of ignorance; besides the experience of others point out that there is nothing like the seer and the universe but the Ātman only. While in the form of universe the Ātman does not lose his own oneness (verses 95 to 149).*

6. *The real nature of the Ātman is pointed out by observing that the various triads are his own expressions only (verses 150 to 176).*

7. *The state of the merging of the triads which is known as the state of the Yogis is illustrated by various examples (verses 177 to 196).*

8. *The phenomena of seeing, the seer and the sight all abide merged in the Ātman. In whatever form and in whichever place He is seen He abides alone in oneness. Surely it cannot be called ignorance (verses 197 to 268).*

9. *How funny it is to call the elaborate expanse emerging from the Pure Knowledge as ignorance is illustrated by having a dig at those who believe in the existence of ignorance (verses 269 to 279).*

10. *The claim of ignorance that it gives knowledge of the world is untenable. Knowledge and ignorance are not related to each other as any object and its property. The whole world is the dazzling illumination of the Ātman, by the Ātman and for the Ātman only (verses 280 to 295).*

1

As a matter of fact, but for the instigation of the knowledge ignorance would have remained concealed below the ears. (No one would have heard about ignorance.)

2

Taking shelter of darkness, a glow-worm shines with (sham) head-light; likewise the ignorance which has no origin is totally sham.

3

As dream's greatness lies in dream; darkness is recognised in darkness; so is the greatness of ignorance in ignorance only.

4

Horses of clay cannot be disciplined (for use), or the ornaments created by a magician cannot be worn.

5

The ignorance even though pricked in the house of the all-knowing (Supreme) does nothing else. Would the moonlight ever raise waves in the mirage (water)?

6

And what is called knowledge is ignorance in another form. One can be kept hidden and the other shown in its place. (No one will know whether it is knowledge or ignorance because both are alike.)

7

Now, let alone this preface! Let us first search ignorance. Knowing the truth about it, we would come to know that knowledge also is false.

8

If ignorance lives in real knowledge (Ātman) as the part of its body, then why does it not render ignorant that (Ātman) where it resides.

9

Where there is ignorance, everything else is turned into ignorance; that is the nature of ignorance.

10

Even some authorities are of the opinion that the Ātman itself is ignorance. The latter though dwelling in it envelopes the former.

11

(This opinion stands refuted thus:) If the ignorance existed in the

seed form, even before the creation of duality, who was there to know of it then?

12

If the ignorance, because of its own state of ignorance cannot know itself, how can it testify its own existence?

13

Therefore, were it to be asserted that ignorance makes itself known by itself, such a conflicting assertion would make the one asserting to observe silence.

14

The only knowing one is the Ātman and if he is fooled by ignorance, then who will take note of that ignorance?

15

If it (ignorance) cannot for its own sake render the knowing one (Ātman) not knowing (ignorance) then one ought to feel ashamed of calling such (as) ignorance.

16

Were the sun to be swallowed by the clouds, by whose light the clouds would be visible? (Or) if sleep overpowers the sleeper, who would enjoy the sleep?

17

Similarly if (the knowledge) in which abides ignorance, itself becomes ignorance then ignorance will disappear without knowing ignorance.

In verses 8 and 9, the argument advanced in favour of ignorance is: it takes refuge in the Ātman and where it resides, it is its property to make everything ignorant. If that be so, then it means that the Knowledge (Ātman) is covered by ignorance as the cloud is covered by the sun in the preceding verse. Therefore, in the absence of knowing faculty there will be no one to bring to light ignorance; as such there will be ignorance of ignorance i.e. no ignorance at all.

18

It has never happened that the thing by which it is discernible that ignorance as such exists, is ignorance itself.

19

To say that there is a cataract in the eye and also that the eye-sight is not blind carries no sense.

20

If the fuel is not burnt in contact with the wild fire, then its power of burning is vain.

21

Were the darkness shut up in a house not to make it dark, why then to call it by the name darkness!

22

Who would call it sleep that does not permit wakeful state to leave. How could that be called night which does not make any dent in day (light)?

23

Similarly, if the Ātman does not lose anything of what he is, then logically the word ignorance would be (considered as) false.

24

Even otherwise, to say that ignorance dwells in Ātman would be a fallacy from the point of logic.

25

Ignorance is a mass of darkness, while the Ātman is a mine of light. How could these two be united together!

26

(This could be if) such pairs as dream and wakefulness or remembrance and forgetfulness could go together in a line;

27

(or) if cold and heat could follow one path to their colony (or if) the darkness could bundle up the rays of the sun;

28

(or) should the night and day come to dwell at one place then

would the Ātman live upon the existence of ignorance.

29

(or) should death and life match each other as a couple then only Ātman and ignorance would be said to live together.

30

Why make such a paradoxical statement as, "Ignorance which is destroyed by Ātman abides in Ātman?"

31

Oh! were the darkness, on a bet, to become light dropping its darkness, then it would naturally and surely become the sun.

32

Were the firewood to drop its dry state and assume the role of fire then that fuel would at once turn into fire.

33

As soon as the stream of water drops its separate existence on reaching the Gangā, it becomes the very Gangā.

34

That which is otherwise ignorance does not remain ignorance as soon as it comes in contact with the Omnipresent Ātman and becomes one with it.

35

Since it is averse to Ātman it does not survive on its contact. Its separate existence also cannot be proved.

36

In the way, if a fish of salt is made alive it can live neither in water nor separate from water, (such is the state of ignorance in Ātman).

37

The Ātman exists only where there is no ignorance; no heed be paid to an idle talk about ignorance.

38

So long as there is an illusion of a serpent (in a rope) it cannot be tied by that rope nor can it be driven away.

Note: Similarly ignorance cannot be tied by Ātman or driven away.

39

Just as the darkness, out of the fear of the day, were to proceed towards the night on a full-moon day, it would be instantly swallowed by the moon;

40

In that way, in both ways the word ignorance has become vain. Its nature cannot be grasped except by proper reasoning.

41

Now let us do some research. What is the real nature of ignorance? Can it be inferred from its doings (by cause—effect relationship) or can it be directly comprehended?

42

Whatever we deduce as the established doctrine from the evidence such as apprehension by senses etc., is all the accomplishment of the ignorance. It is not ignorance itself.

43

Like a creeper growing straight from the sprout looks beautiful but it is not the seed but the outgrowth of the seed only.

44

Or whatever good or evil is alleged as seen in a dream it is not the sleep but the child of the sleep.

45

(Or) just as the moon even though one, looks double in the sky, it looks so because of the defective eye-sight but it is not the defective eye-sight itself.

46

In that way the triad, the one proving, the thing proved and the proof, is evolved from ignorance and not the ignorance itself.

47

In short, the modes of proof such as direct apprehension etc., which are the specific findings of ignorance do not establish ignorance; (however, the existence of ignorance) has to be inferred. There is no other go.

Note: For various modes of proof see comments on the verse II.27.

The oft-quoted illustration of the pot explains how the material cause is inferred from the result. In making an earthen pot two entities figure, one the pot-maker i.e. the instrumental cause and the mud i.e. the material cause from which the pot is made. From the pot the existence of mud is logically inferred.

48

Were the existence of ignorance to be accepted from its doings then the latter also are ignorance only.

49

What appears in dream is all dream (unreal). Then is the one seeing it (dream) different from it? So the effect of ignorance is ignorance only.

Note: The proposition stated earlier means that if the material instrumental cause is unreal the result obtained would also be unreal. As stated in verse 41, a research was undertaken about ignorance. Our findings i.e. the knowledge obtained, is deduced from instrumental cause ignorance. Therefore knowledge of ignorance which is the result is also ignornce.

50

As jaggery tasting itself, or the lamp-black getting smeared by itself or the stake (on which criminals are impaled) impaling itself.

51

The cause and effect being indistinct, the effect of ignorance will also be ignorance. Then who is there to deal with it?

52

Therefore, (so far as ignorance is concerned) no one should think in terms of a prover (knower) and the thing proved (ignorance), because after all the proof is nothing but a fish of mirage!

53

So, dear friend, is there any difference between a sky-flower and that which cannot be assessed by any proof?

54

So, when it (ignorance) has not allowed any proof to exist and there is no one to take its brief, from this discussion realise that ignorance is false.

55

Thus the ignorance being incapable of being established directly (by proof) or indirectly by inference stands disproved.

56

That which is incapable of producing any results, that which is no causation of anything and that which is shy of calling itself ignorance, how can it be recognised as true?

57

(Ignorance) indeed cannot make the Ātman experience any dream. It also does not know to put (Him) to sleep in His own place.

58

So let it be; (it may be argued that) when the Ātman is all pure even then ignorance is associated with it.

59

Just as fire-energy is latent in the firewood, even though not kindled (by friction of two pieces).

60

In that way (ignorance exists in Ātman) (To that the answer is that) when the Ātman cannot even suffer his own revelation by being called Ātman, will ignorance entertain hopes to remain there!

61

Can the soot be removed even before the lamp is lighted or can the shade of a tree be abandoned before the tree is planted?

62

Can a fragrant cleansing paste be applied to a body before the latter is created or can a mirror be cleaned before it is made?

63

Like the intellect assuming that the cream is in the milk while in the udder attempting to separate it,

64

In that way how can the Ātman which is not even aware of itself will have anything in it resembling ignorance?

65

Therefore, that ignorance was not there then also is by itself proved. Then what is the point in the idle talk that it did not exist!

66

Were one to say that the ignorance did exist even when the Ātman was devoid of the state of being or non-being, then it would be like—

67

(The talk of) the 'not-being' of a pitcher being broken into hundreds of pieces or (like) the death having been extinguished in its entirety;

68

(Or) the sleep should get asleep, or a swoon should get swooned or darkness should fall into a dark well;

69

(Or) non-existence should feel embarrassed or the heart of a plantain tree should get broken or a whip of the sky should be cracked.

Note: The last line is capable of different translations such as—a piece of the sky would fall down or the folds of the sky would be shaken off or the transparency of the sky should get muffled.)

70

(Or) like the dead being poisoned, dumb being gagged or unwritten words being erased,

71

in that way, it is false to say (as stated in verse 58 above) that ignorance is abiding its time with Ātman (i.e. it is associated with it). Now it has become one with the Supreme.

72

(In that argument there is a fallacy as) how could a barren woman give birth to a child or a parched seed sprout out or anyone see the sun in darkness.

73

In that way, even if the Pure Consciousness were to be searched in any manner for ignorance, could it be traced out?

74

Were one desiring to have the cream to stir up the milkpot could it come to surface or get dissolved! Such is the situation.

Note: If the Ātman is stirred by investigation to bring to surface ignorance it will only get dissolved.

75

Were one to wake up hurriedly to seize sleep would that be found out or would that disappear which was there?

76

Is it not madness to look out for ignorance in this way? That which cannot be found out by search, how could it *suo motu* reveal itself (when it is not in existence at all)?

77

In short, in no way, the light of existence of ignorance is able to enlighten the city of thought.

78

Oh! Has the vision of thought at any time seen existence of

ignorance either with Ātman or separate from Him?

79

Ignorance did not besmear the face of determination. Evidence did not listen to it even in dream. Due to its impatience (or strange nature) ignorance lost itself.

Note: Determination is here personified as one who is going to determine. Since ignorance did not give any inducement to it either to decide in its favour or at least keep neutral when the subject was broached for determination, the latter went against ignorance. Similarly evidence is personified as one giving evidence. Witnesses are usually briefed and tutored but in this case they refused to listen to ignorance; thus ignorance completely lost its case.

80

With all this, my dear friend, have you come across any device to trace the path leading to ignorance?

81

It would be like illuminating a ceremonial hall, erected with the pillars of a hare's horns, with the rays of the moon on the new-moon's day.

82

Or like enjoying the festivity in which the children of a barren lady are garlanded with sky flowers.

83

Or should the measure of sky-cavity be filled with ghee of tortoise then only such fancies (about the existence of ignorance) would come true.

84

By all means we really tried to bring out ignorance. But it does not exist. How long we should go on saying this!

85

Therefore I do not feel inclined to utter the word Ignorance even in a dream. However, another idea comes to my mind about it.

86

The seeing phenomenon of the Ātman is not confined to seeing himself or others,

87

but he spreads out before himself this visible expansive world of objects and becomes himself the seer.

88

Where, it is even embarrassing to refer to the existence of Ātman, in that very place there comes up such a big world which is actually visible.

89

Therefore, even though ignorance is not visible, it is there. No doubt about it! The inference drawn from what is actually visible has become the proof (of its existence).

90

The moon is one but if it appears double in the sky, should it not be inferred that the eye is affected with the eye-disease called 'Timir' (in which things look double)?

Note: Cf. verse VII.45.

91

It is not seen from where the trees standing separate from the ground take water, still they appear fresh and green.

92

One cannot avoid concluding that the trees are certainly absorbing water through the roots. Ignorance is likewise. It is known (as existing) from the visible (world).

93

Sleep disappears when one becomes awake; but the one fast asleep does not know it. But since it (sleep) shows dream, one has to say that it exists.

94

Therefore, in view of the appearance of the vast world of objects in the Pure Ātman one can happily say that ignorance does exist.

95

How could such knowledge be called ignorance? What! Can one that creates light be called darkness?

Note: In verses 85–95 a new idea was developed about the existence of ignorance. To that, this and the following verses provide a suitable answer.

96

Ah! can that which has maintained a thing even brighter than the moon be called lamp-black?

97

If the water can perform the function of fire, then it could be accepted that ignorance is the source of the worldflow.

98

If the moon with the splendour of her phases could be made to meet the new-moon, then the knowledge will be entitled to be called ignorance.

99

Will poison let down from its udder a stream of nectar out of a sweet will to do so! If it does yield, it will not be called poison.

Note: A beautiful poetic fancy that poison will be yielding nectar of its own accord as a cow or a buffalo yields milk.

100

When all the phenomena spread out before us take place only because of knowledge then how come the flood of ignorance here?

101

If all this were to be called ignorance what would be the nature of knowledge? Otherwise, whatever there is, is all Ātman.

102

Nothing happens to him; and whatever happens he does not know himself; all the proofs, one can say on oath, become zero.

103

In his primordial state nothing takes place to justify saying that he exists. However there is no need to add that he does not exist.

Note: Since no activity takes place he is likely to be considered as life-less. However, his existence has no beginning; therefore, to say that he exists becomes redundant. Likewise he being indestructible he never becomes non-existent. He therefore, transcends both these states.

104

His existence is independent of anyone else's. He appears (as existing) without anyone else seeing him. When he does exist how can one say that his existence is lost (i.e. he does not exist)?

105

He silently suffers the accusations of the nihilists who assert that he does not exist and turns his back on any attributes.

106

Will the all-knowing one, who can see even in deep sleep (which is never visible to anybody) fail to see this world of objects? He does not maintain any connection with himself becoming the object of seeing.

107

What is there what Vedās have not said about? Yet, they did not mention (his) name even since he did not have attributes (to describe).

108

What is there that the sun does not show? But has he shown the Ātman? The Ātman is such an object which the sky cannot contain.

109

Th ego calling the body—the bundle of bones—as I, protects and supports it but (meticulously) avoids that object (the Ātman).

110

The intellect knows everything knowable but misses the object (the Ātman) only. The mind fancies everything but him.

111

The faculties of senses which continuously rub their mouths against the rugged ground of the objects of senses do not find any pleasure in him.

112

Will anyone be able to comprehend in totality the Ātman who is fully gratified by eating everything including his non-existence.

113

He who cannot be an object for himself (to know) as the taste cannot taste itself. How can he be the object for anyone else to see?

Note: Cf. VI.92.

114

This apart! that ignorance, as soon as it comes forward before him by assuming innumerable names and forms disappears out of fear.

115

Therefore, where there is no hunger (desire) to see his own face how can anyone else get any admission there (to see him)?

116

Just as (in a particular gambling game) a person (who while putting a stick inside a ring of leather comes to realise that it has remained outside and thus) gets cheated, so any determination about (the nature of ignorance) proves a losing game.

117

Just as the intellect of one who having mentally measured the length of his shadow tries to jump over it gets diffused.

118

In that way, one trying hard to establish that the Ātman is like this or that misses to lay his hands on him.

119

To what extent to narrate! here the words have no scope to expand. In Pure Knowledge the seeds of seeing exist (viz., the seer, the act of seeing and the object of seeing).

120

How can ignorance be found in the Reality, on whose strength the eye-less-ness as well as the blindness are cured and the vision is restored.

121

He is not able to comprehend himself as an object of seeing since he is under an obligation not to be a seer.

122

Who would meet whom? How could there be faculty of seeing? Because everything (i.e. all objects of seeing) along with unity has disappeared into his stomach.

123

Brushing aside all these difficulties he threw open the doors for light (to come in).

124

Innumerable scenes and forms arise one after another but the Supreme is the substratum of all.

125

That Supreme substratum has become so infatuated with the great wealth of objects that he does not care to look into a mirror already seen, since it—in the form of precious objects—is out of fashion.

126

He is so magnanimous that he provides the sight super-fine and modern clothes in the form of world-objects to wear every moment.

127

Discarding quickly as soiled clothes worn the preceding moment, the sight goes in for the latest design (of clothes).

128

Likewise, the Pure Consciousness wearing every moment new ornaments of knowledge remains conscious of them.

129

Not feeling happy about his loneliness in that Supreme seat, he girded up his loins to become the vast universe.

Note: Cf. his dual appearence mentioned in verse II.13 and his sportive creation of the world when he did not like even his oneness to be mentioned referred to in verse I.31.

130

This sort of omniscience is observed on the face of the Pure Consciousness. You will not find it in any other house.

131

The sight thus shows the meeting between the knowledge and ignorance and meets itself by becoming the object of seeing.

132

He by becoming himself a seer of those beautiful objects of seeing feels happy and fills within himself those very objects through his sight.

133

When all these give and take dealings take place, the link of unity is never broken like the oneness of the face is not broken by its reflection in the mirror.

134

The horse of a good breed sleeps standing; his position is not different while awake (he keeps on standing). In that way the give and take transactions (seeing and becoming the objects of seeing) take place.

Note: These dealings do not cause any change in the state of the Ātman.

135

Or as the water enjoys swinging in the form of ripples, the Ātman

merrily sports in his state of Ātman.

136

Were the fire to interweave and adorn itself by garlands of flame, would there be any dents of distinction in it!

137

Or were the sun to be surrounded by his family of rays could that sun be called different?

138

Would the oneness of the moon suffer because she is covered by the plenty of moon-light?

139

(Or) if the lotus blooms forth with thousands of petals, it would not appear as a different lotus.

140

The king Sāhasrārjuna had thousand hands. Will he be reckoned as the thousand and first? (as a separate entity from his one thousand hands).

141

There is a cluster of innumerable threads on a loom but is there anything else except the threads?

142

Even when crores of words gather in the residence of speech they are all nothing but speech.

143

The twigs in the form of the objects of seeing and the innumerable waves of visions are created by the (Ātman's) seer's seeing faculty only.

144

A lump of jaggery, broken into pieces for selling it in retail,—all that will be simply jaggery only.

Note: A lump of jaggery is prepared in a large mould from the sugarcane juice boiled and thickened by a certain process. For selling

it in retail in smaller quantities it is broken up.

145

Likewise whether he be the seer of objects or expands himself as the object of seeing, he being one, there is no room for the talk of distinction.

146

Although he has occupied the entire universe there is no scratch of duality on his unity.

147

In the multi-coloured and white garments there are different shades of colour but they are threads only.

148

Were the eyes to be able to see the entire world without loosening the closed eye-lids,

149

were the tree to grow extensively before even the seedling sprouts out, the expansion of monism could be compared with it.

150

When he is filled with desire that he should no longer see himself he retires on a bed of his own body.

151

When the eye-lids are closed the vision enters itself.

152

Or as the sea is full by itself before the moon rises or as the female tortoise withdraws her limbs within herself;

153

or as the moon on the new-moon day enters the seventeenth phase of her own accord,

154

In that way, the seer having conquered the objects of seeing,

before being dubbed as a conqueror rests in himself.

155

The entire phenomenon is all natural. Then who could see and whom? The state of non-seeing is his natural sleep.

156

Should this state of non-seeing be given up and instead that of seeing be wished for, then he himself is already there as the objects of seeing.

157

The Supreme is the seer as well as the objects of seeing from time immemorial. What is new to be created now by anyone!

158

The sky and cavity, the breeze and touch and the fire and heat—do they need correlation?

159

When he gleams in the form of the universe he sees it in his front. If it is not there he also sees its non-existence.

160

Should the existence or the non-existence of the entire world of objects get drowned he is the seer of that state also.

161

The moonlight whiteness of camphor is natural. It is not as if a white coating is added to it. Similarly the phenomenon of seeing in the Ātman is indigenous.

162

What is more; the Supreme, in whatever condition he may be, is ever seeing himself

163

Just as one fancying different countries according to his wishful thinking proudly saunters through them,

164

or when the eye-ball is pressed into its socket the eye sparkles like a star. There is no wonder.

165

Therefore, there is no reason to make the accusation against the Pure Consciousness that he is seeing himself.

166

Who creates the veil of brightness for a gem? Does the gold adorn itself by another gold ornament?

167

It is like the sandal applying its scent all over itself or nectar serving self with own nectar or jaggery tasting its sweetness;

168

or the camphor is coated with white colour or the fire is made hot by heating,

169

or like a creeper winding itself around a tree and preparing a shelter for itself without any conscious efforts.

170

As the lamp-light shines forth with the accumulated light-energy the Pure Consciousness, filled with primordial energy, vibrates.

171

Thus he goes on observing himself without the least intention of doing so.

172

The seeing or non-seeing (of the Ātman) is like the moon shining without it occuring to her that there is any difference between darkness and light.

173

Therefore, if he thinks that it should not happen (i.e. not to

create the world of objects) he is able to achieve that because by nature he is self-sufficient (he has to do nothing to fulfil his desire).

174

There appears a slight difference between the two—the seer and the seen; but that also vanishes when they coalesce.

175

The object of seeing merges into the seer and the state of seeing culminates into the object of seeing. Thus both of them remain in the state of non-existence, which is their essence.

Note: In verse 171 while describing how the Supreme Ātman even though he has assumed the form of the universe, remains aloof from it but keeps on looking and enjoying his own self, Jnānadeva has shown the way of Self-Realisation and in the following four verses has given hints to ponder over:

1. The seeing or not seeing of the universe i.e. enjoying and discarding the pleasures of the world has no relationship with your own soul. It remains unaffected by pleasures and pains arising out of your own actions as the moon, though it gives shelter to both dark and lighted nights, remains unconcerned and unaffected by the nights;
2. If you want to avoid the sorrows and pains of life and enjoy happiness, then let it be understood with a firm conviction that bliss is your own nature and no effort is required on your part to enjoy happiness;
3. It is true that very often, the universe, the ego, the sense of possession and mineness disturb you in the waking state; but during sound sleep you, the universe and all other feelings connected therewith disappear and you enjoy happiness;
4. But you believe in what happens in the waking state as true and ignore what you have experienced during sound sleep. Since both are your own experiences, they are equally important and should be given due consideration.

So if you ponder over both these states, you will realise that all the feelings that disturb you during the waking state arise from your seeing action alone, and you believe all that to be real. Now try to control the seeing activity completely in the sense that it should wander neither over external things nor internal things like thoughts, ego, etc.

Then you will find that outside universe and your own self will merge into that blissful natural state of the Ātman. In short, having full understanding that you are in no way connected with the pains, if you withdraw your sight from seeing you will experience your own self—Sāmbhavi state.

176

Wherever and whenever the seer and the seen both come together to embrace each other they get dissolved.

177

Their extinction is not like fire entering camphor or camphor being dropped in fire.

Note: Both are extinguished simultaneously.

178

When one is subtracted from one what remains is zero represented by a dot and that also stands erased. In like manner, the seer and the seen are extinguished.

179

Nay, were one to embrace one's own reflection both the reflection and the action of embracing would vanish.

180

When the seeing faculty shows its displeasure (by absenting itself) both the seer and the seen meet and become one.

181

So long as the Eastern and Western seas do not meet they remain as seas but when they combine it is water only.

182

Every moment, many such triads (the seer, the seeing and the seen or the subject and object of enjoyment and the act of enjoying) continue to be formed. Need they be paid any attention!

183

The Ātman's swallowing the two special aspects (the seer and the

seen) and emitting the usual aspect (of attributelessness) is like the closing and opening of an eye.

184

As soon as the eyelids close, the seeing faculty oozes in abundance but when they open, it vanishes. How strange!

185

One accomplishes within himself the Yogic state when the intermediary state of seeing (awareness) develops by eclipsing the seer and the object of seeing.

Note: When the seer and the object come in contact, the interlinking phenomenon of seeing invariably occurs. But when it is developed by Yoga practices, it eclipses both the seer and the object and blooms into awareness of Self. That is the state known as a transcendental state (*unmani avasthā*).

186

(It is like) the state of water intermediary between the dissolution of one ripple and formation of another ripple.

187

Or (it is like) our state when the sleep has ended but the full awakening is not there.

Note: Cf. IV.41.

188

One can understand (the state of the Ātman) while experiencing the state of sight which is taken off from one object and not yet fixed on another.

189

The sky depicts this state beautifully when the day is just over and the night is not yet ushered in.

190

It is a meaningful state which is not touched by either the breath which is inhaled and absorbed or the one which is not yet exhaled.

191

Or it is like the state which would arise when all senses will start enjoying their sense-objects simultaneously.

192

The state like this is the highest state of the Ātman. Here you do not come across seeing or non-seeing phenomena.

193

Is there anything like a mirror seeing or not seeing its own clear reflection in itself!

194

When the mirror is there, the face has to be either before it or behind it; but if the mirror is not there can the face be either in the front or behind itself?

195

The sun sees in all direction but can he enjoy seeing his rising and setting?

196

Can the juice drink itself or can it hide its face (to avoid drinking)? It is not possible because of its liquid state.

197

In that way, the Ātman being self-illuminated knows neither seeing nor not-seeing (the object of seeing). In fact both these (seeing and not seeing) are his integral parts.

198

The Ātman being himself the act of seeing does not see himself. Thus he is non-seeing by nature.

199

But he goes on seeing, so how can he be non-seeing? Therefore, he is also a seer by nature.

200

Both live happily with each other in the same style; but binding each other they destroy themselves.

201

If he is the seer at the time of seeing then he cannot be one non-seeing. Therefore, both of them do not know what suits him.

202

The Ātman abides stealthily from seeing and non-seeing. If he sees then who sees and what?

Note: He being both the seer and the seen it is as good as not seeing.

203

If the seer perceives the world of objects should it not be said that he sees the objects but his seeing is not on account of the existence of the objects.

204

When the objects are perceived by the seer they are truly the seer only (and not the objects). So when the objects are not there then how can it be said that the seer has perceived the objects.

205

Even though the face is seen in the mirror, the face as it is remains in its own place. Therefore, the experience (of seeing) has become vain.

206

On a close look it is seen that the seeing of the Ātman is like the seeing of a person his own self while in sleep.

207

While sleeping comfortably on a bed if one is carried by others in dream, is it his real state?

208

Or (while in sleep) one sees a head-less destitute couple reigning

over a kingdom. Is it all that real?

209

A person in whatever manner and whichever place he is before going to sleep remains in the same state during dream. There is no difference.

210

A thirsty person feels afflicted when he does not come across a mirage; however, if he comes across one, what does he gain? (His thirst remains unsatiated).

211

If one takes his shadow as a companion it would be good for nothing.

212

The seer, by becoming the objects of seeing and showing them to the seer wasted the act of seeing also.

213

The seer himself is the objects of seeing so what is the propriety of showing them to him? Even if not shown, is he not there by himself?

214

Does the face become of no avail if it does not see itself in a mirror? Even without a mirror it is in itself.

215

In that way, if Māyā (ignorance) does not show Ātman to Ātman then who will be of no avail, the Ātman or Māyā?

216

The position of the Ātman without becoming a seer is status quo. Then why should he be made the object of seeing?

217

If the Ātman is shown as said earlier, it would be otiose: (he being self-evident) showing him as well as saying (that he is shown) is equally useless.

218

In the false appearance of a serpent in a rope there is really rope only; so in the appearance of various objects in the seer it is the seer only (Ātman).

219

It is unmistakable that the face is in its own place as well as reflected in the mirror. However, the real face is in its own place and not in the mirror.

220

In that way, out of the two, the seer is real and the objects of seeing though seen (as in the mirror) are unreal.

221

Even if the object is unreal your saying that it is visible establishes its existence.

222

(This assertion is refuted thus) If someone in the act of seeing another object becomes a seer then it could be considered that he has seen the object.

Note: The phenomenon of seeing is established when there are two entities—one the seer and the other the object of seeing; next the seer should look at the object for then only the seeing phenomenon occurs. But in the case of the Ātman his seeing is altogether different as explained in the next verse.

223

(Here the circumstances are different.) Whether he is seeing or not seeing, whether he is one or many, except for him there is no object of seeing.

Note: For the phenomenon of seeing two different entities are essential, one the seer and the other seen. Here there is only one entity.

224

What else can a mirror show to the face except the reflection of the face; even if it does not show the reflection, still the face will be where it is by itself.

225

In that way, if he is not shown, he is in his own place; if he is shown, he remains as he is.

226

In that way, a person is only one by himself whether shown by the wakeful condition or lost (concealed) by sleep.

227

Or the king who is reminded of his status by addressing him as a king is by himself a king only.

228

Or even though not so reminded about his royal status there is no loss of his prestige as a king.

229

In that way shown or not shown, he being beyond either, neither flourishes nor declines but maintains his status quo.

230

Then, what for this madness that he (the Atman) should show himself? When there is no one to see then who will look into the mirror?

231

Whether the existence of the object is created by the lamp (by showing it) or whether because of the object the existence of the lamp stands established? All causes of existence derive their strength from the Ātman.

232

The flames indeed illumine fire; however, can they be considered as other than fire?

233

Whatever cause we may talk about, it comes to light because He shows it. Even though the Ātman sees the object, by nature he is the object of seeing also.

234

Therefore, He (the Ātman), that self-illuminer, is himself the means of seeing himself. There is no other means.

Note: Verses 231–234 explain the query raised in verse 230.

235

All that is visible is His expansion only. There is nothing else.

236

In ornaments and gold it is only gold that shimmers because there is nothing else.

237

In both water and ripples, there is only water. There is not and will not be anything else.

238

Experience it (camphor) by smelling its fragrance, or feel it by hand, or see it with eyes, anyway.

239

there is nothing else in it but camphor. So is the Ātman. Try by any means, he alone is the seer.

240

Whether seen as the object of seeing or abiding as the seer, except him there is nothing else or extra.

241

Let the Gangā flow in the Gangā form or abide merged in the sea. From the viewpoint of water, there is no difference in either form.

242

It is beside the point whether the ghee is in a liquid or frozen condition. In quality it is ghee and not otherwise.

243

Whether flames or fire they are not considered as different; there is fire only and nothing else.

244

In that way, whether as the object of seeing or the seer, both the states are futile. From a very close observation it is seen to be only vibrations of Ātman only.

245

From the point of view of the Ātman there is nothing else but the Ātman that vibrates. Then by seeing what, does the Ātman become the seer?

246

Neither the object of seeing flashes in front, nor does the seer peep from behind to see it. His seeing himself is the vibrations only.

247

(It is like) the ripples rolling on in water, or the gold covering itself with gold, or the sight getting stuck up in seeing.

248

(It is like) uniting sound with sound, fragrance meeting fragrance or serving a dainty of contentment to contentment.

249

(Or) jaggery is covered by jaggery or the Mount Meru is plated with gold or the fire is wrapped in flames.

250

What more should I say? Were the sky to go to the sky-bed, then who goes to sleep and who is awake?

251

So also his seeing is not like seeing anything and his not seeing anything is like seeing.

252

Here neither the words are tolerated nor is the knowledge accommodated, nor experience permitted to parade itself.

253

Therefore, his seeing himself is like this. In fact no one sees anything.

254

What is more! the Ātman illumines on account of the Ātman only and he remains awake without being awakened.

255

On the plea of seeing his own self he magnifies himself in different roles (the objects of seeing, the seer and the faculty of seeing) but he does not allow his own state to be disturbed.

256

If he remains without seeing a mirror still it is his seeing only and even if he sees it, it is neither seeing nor non-seeing.

257

Even if he expands he does not lose his oneness; similarly even if he contracts his existence continues.

258

The sun is never able to catch hold of darkness. Then why should he pay heed to the story of light!

259

Whether it be darkness or light the glowing sun abides anywhere in a solitary state.

260

In that way, the Ātman never misses his own self, whatever role as per his own liking he may assume out of fun.

261

The boundary of a sea is never transgressed nor is there even a wee-bit change in its watery state, though thousands of waves rise and subside in it.

262

The rays of the sun arise from him but they go out of his orb. Therefore the Ātman, the wealth of understanding, cannot be compared to the sun.

263

So long as there are no cracks in the cotton-capsule, it cannot provide the world the cloth.

264

A bar of gold cannot provide ornaments by keeping intact all the portion of its body.

265

Air cannot go from one direction to another without crossing the obstruction on the way; so it cannot be compared with the Ātman.

266

In short, there is nothing else which could be compared with Ātman. He can be compared with himself only.

Note: After describing the play of the Ātman in verse 260, it is compared with the various other phenomena; it is explained that except sea no other thing such as the sun, the cotton-capsule, the bar of gold or air, stands comparison with the play of the Ātman. In that play, the Ātman's oneness remains intact. It does not undergo any change. Besides he remains all the while inactive. His sport is therefore an effortless self-accomplished state without any change. The world of objects is not the outcome of the activities of the Ātman. It is the Ātman only in his natural form. The cause and effect illustrations given in verses 262–265 point out their essential difference with the illustration given in verse 261. There are three characteristics of the Ātman's play viz.; (1) the field of cause and effect is co-terminus; (2) in the effect the cause is found intact and (3) there is no difference whatsoever in the properties of the cause and effect. The most appropriate example given here is that of the waves and the sea. The waves' expansion is co-terminus with the boundary of the sea. Except water there is nothing else in waves and all the properties of water subsist in waves. In other examples, either the causal objects undergo change or lose

their properties or expand beyond the original boundary before they produce anything.

267

While he is taking his meal very fast with morsels of his own light the food is neither exhausted nor are there any folds on his stomach (indicating that it is empty).

268

Thus the unparalleled Ātman enjoying his own play rules like a sovereign.

269

To call all this ignorance, it would mean that the law of the jungle prevails. Still (after reading all the elaborate expatiation given on the subject) were one to insist in calling it so, should it be tolerated!

270

Were one giving light to be called ignorance, it would amount to calling the collyrium (by applying which to the eyes hidden treasure is found out) lamp-black.

271

To call the self-illumined Ātman as ignorance is like calling the gold idol Ambikā (The consort of Śiva) shimmering with golden hue Kālikā (a jet black goddess).

272

In reality all varieties of elements right from Śiva down to the earthly objects are illumined by his refulgent rays.

Notes: According to Siva-Advaita there are thirty six primary elements from Siva to earth; they are classified into three categories;

1. Pure elements (five)—Siva, Sakti, Sadāshiva, Ishwar and Shuddha Vidyā (Pure Knowledge).
2. Mixed elements (seven)—Māyā, Purusha, Kalā, Vidyā, Rāga, Kāla and Niyati.
3. Impure elements (twenty-four)—nature (Prakriti), intellect, ego, mind, five sense-organs, five action-organs, five Tanmātrās and five gross Tattvās—ether, air, fire, water and earth.

All these elements shine and become active on account of one ray of the sun in the form of knowledge.

273

(or He is) the one on account of whom, the knowledge knows, the sight sees and the giver of light (the sun) gets light.

274

Should any wretched being pointing his finger at Him say that he is ignorance, it would indeed be like darkness bundling up the sun.

275

While describing the greatness of knowledge, if you add a prefix 'a' to the word 'Jnāna' it would be a unique way (*apūrva*—which never happened) of explaining the meaning of the word.

Note: If prefix 'a' is added to 'Jnāna' it connotes ignorance (*ajñāna*).

276

Why should you put fire inside a box made of lac. It will at once make inside and outside space one (i.e. it will burn the box completely).

277

Therefore, to call that knowledge which is pulsating as the universe as ignorance (according to the doctrine of ignorance) is like the faculty of speech indulging in loose talk.

278

To utter the word ignorance is sin like that of a cow-slaughter and further it is tainted by falsehood. Why should knowledge be involved in the controversy of ignorance?

Note: Even to utter the word 'cow-slaughter' (*govadha*) is to commit sin. This word (*govadha*) also means killing of the sun of knowledge i.e. 'ignorance'. Therefore, to utter this word is equivalent to committing sin; besides, since knowledge is never killed, to say that it is killed is another sin of falsehood. Therefore why should the wise people enter into unnecessary controversy over ignorance (*ajñāna*)!

279

Even the utterance of the word ignorance tickles some knowledge (in the mind of a person who hears it). Therefore one has perforce to accept it as knowledge.

280

Let it be! The King Ātman sees his own self in different forms with his own light.

281

While thinking over the word, whatever idea of the object (represented by the word) appears before the mind's eye, that object is comprehended in that form only.

282

Ignorance might say, 'I create the knowledge of the world' therefore, by inference existence of ignorance is proved.

Note: On hearing the word ignorance, the mind imagines existence of something which is ignorance and that very idea takes shape and appears before him in a comprehensible manner. The Ātman is one without a second; however, we comprehend the world. Therefore, the knowledge of the world is derived from ignorance only; as such by inference, the Ātman which is the primal cause of the world is proved to be ignorance.

283

(The above doubt is refuted thus:) The world itself has established it in the most unequivocal manner that there is no ignorance. There is no correlation between knowledge and ignorance as an object and its properties.

Note: Some thinkers believe that knowledge is the property of ignorance. There is, however, no basis to conclude that the knowledge of the world comes from ignorance. Knowledge and ignorance are two opposite things and it is proved by the world that two opposite things are never correlated to each other as an object and its property. Take for example fire and cold. These two are opposites. So cold will never be the property of fire.

284

Were it ever possible for water to create pearls, or the ashes to keep the lamp burning then only knowledge can be said to be the property of ignorance.

285

Were it ever possible for the flames to shoot up from the moon, or for the sky to drop down stone slabs then only ignorance could emit the resplendent knowledge.

286

In a way, it was a miracle that poison was churned out of the ocean of milk. How could, however, there be pure nectar in the deadly poison?

287

Assuming that ignorance was born to knowledge but the ignorance dies as soon as it is born. Why not then say that only the knowledge remains and not ignorance.

Note: As soon as ignorance is born it becomes conscious of self; in other words it turns into knowledge hence it is said that it dies as soon as it is born.

288

Therefore, the sun is as (big as) only the sun; the moon is like the moon and a lamp can be compared to a lamp.

289

The light is only the light and make no mistake about it. So the entire universe is but an illumination of the Ātman.

290

'All this world is perceived because of His light only', thus declare the Srutis. Is that declaration an empty belch (acknowledgement)?

Note: If the hunger is fully gratified the stomach gives out a belching sound indicating full contentment derived from meals.

291

Therefore, the brilliance of the Ātman adorns the grace of the

Ātman and that is enjoyed by the Ātman only.

292

Ignoring this, were one to say that ignorance is the cause for the Ātman to illuminate then the entire (discourse) is vain.

293

Therefore, the real state of ignorance is not ascertainable by any means. On contemplating over the subject it is indeed found to be unreal.

Note: That ignorance as a substance does not exist is proved by seven means of proving:

1. It does not find any shelter in the Supreme.
2. It does not subsist in its own form before the Supreme.
3. Its independent existence is not probable.
4. It is said that it is both real and unreal; but no such thing ever exists which is both real and unreal.
5. It is not provable by any evidence.
6. In the Supreme it cannot exist in a seed form.
7. It bears no cause and effect relationship with the universe of animate and inanimate objects.

Thus ignorance does not exist either within or without the Supreme. It is neither traceable nor is there any propriety of accepting its existence. Therefore, on due consideration, ignorance does not exist.

294

By going to the abode of night, the sun will not be able to collect any portion of the scattered darkness.

295

While trying to stuff sleep in a bag, wakefulness slips out of hands. He remains there alone in a dazzling state.

Note: When the real knowledge dawns what becomes the state of such a person is explained in the last two verses. In such a state one does not retain the past memory that there was such a thing as ignorance and that knowledge has destroyed it. Therefore, when he tries to search for ignorance his knowledge is unable to grasp it; not only that even that knowledge (i.e. the wakeful condition) does not survive and he abides for ever in a state of the absolute dazzling knowledge.

CHAPTER VIII

ज्ञानखंडन

Disproving Knowledge

(In this chapter the first seven verses delineate the state of freedom realised by Jnānadeva through the grace of his preceptor and in the following verses he has explained how in the domain of Pure Knowledge there does not exist knowledge vis-a-vis ignorance or vice-versa.)

1

As far as we are concerned there is not even knowledge of ignorance in us. Our Master and Lord made us realise what we really are.

Note: It is in keeping with the traditional style that Jnānadeva while describing his own state has addressed himself in the plural word-form. He says that as his name signifies (the God of Knowledge) there is no knowledge vis-a-vis ignorance in him. His Master Nivrittinātha has made him realise his own state of being—knowing and bliss.

2

But when we try to see how we are, the consciousness feels shy. What to do!

3

Up till now our worthy preceptor has with great pleasure brought us up to such greatness that we are unable to contain within ourselves.

4

In our condition of Self-realisation there is no addition; in Self-awareness there is no depreciation, and even though the state of emancipation is closely sticking to our body it does not cause any disruption.

The word of words which can tell our story is not yet born. There is no vision which can behold us.

6

Who can enjoy the view by making us the object of seeing since we ourselves are not able to see us?

7

There is no wonder, we can neither reveal nor conceal ourselves. Our state of existence also somehow survives.

8

Nay, we would not like to hand over to the faculty of speech (for narration) whatever state is conferred on us by Shri Nivrittnātha.

9

The ignorance dare not confront it (the state explained earlier). How can the Māyā (illusion) which is already dead come to life?

10

In the locality where ignorance is not prevalent who will understand the subject of knowledge?

11

When it is night it becomes necessary to light lamps. But it is sheer waste of labour (to do so) when there is the sun.

12

Therefore, where no ignorance exists, the knowledge (vis-a-vis ignorance) also vanishes. Now the road is closed to both—the knowledge and ignorance.

13

Even otherwise, the two appellations, 'knowledge' and 'ignorance' have given rise to a spate of interpretations.

Note: The interpretations have shown that their meanings are interchangeable; ignorance means there is no knowledge of anything; it therefore conveys that it is knowledge of 'knowing nothing'. Hence it is equivalent to knowledge. Similarly in the state of Pure Knowledge there is no knowledge of that state also. It is thus as good as ignorance.

In this way these things have lost their real existence. They have merged in the Pure Knowledge:

14

Were the husband and wife (thinking of exchanging their positions) to cut off their heads and replace them on each other's torso, instead of effecting a change in their positions, they would be ending their lives.

15

Or just as a lamp lighted in the rear serves no purpose or sight peering into the darkness is vain;

16

in that way, that which knows totally nothing whatsoever is termed as ignorance, but how can that be ignorance whereby everything is known?

17

In that way, the knowledge came in place of ignorance and the ignorance was ousted by knowledge; both became unproductive through each other.

18

The one who knows, knows not; and one who does not know knows. What is the use of continuing such existence by the knowledge and ignorance?

19

In this way, having stomached both the knowledge and ignorance in the form of day and night (respectively), there arises the sun of consciousness in the sky of Pure Knowledge.

CHAPTER IX

जीवन्मुक्तदशाकथन

Description of the State of Liberation in Life

1

Now, fragrance turned into nose, ears sprouted from sound, and mirrors became eyes;

2

Fans began oscillating with their own breeze, heads blossomed into Champaks exuding aroma;

3

The tongue turned into juice, the lotus bloomed as the sun, and the Chakor (partridge) became the moon;

4

The flowers became honey-bees, young girls changed into youths, the sleepy ones became their own beds;

5

The pure sight turned into charming objects like the pure gold bar turning into well-carved ornaments;

6

The mango blossoms became cuckoos, the body became the fragrant breeze of the Malaya mountain, flavours turned into gourmets;

7

In that way, the objects of enjoyment and their enjoyers or the

objects of seeing and their seers, all of them dissolve into the indivisible homogenous Supreme.

8

Although the Shevanti' flower (chrysanthemum) blooms into thousands of petals its state as 'Shevanti' flower does not come off.

Note: Cf. verse VII. 139.

9

While the transactions of new and ever-new experiences go on with great fanfare in the state of inactivity there is no awareness at all of what is going on.

Note: The state of inactivity is the state of complete absorption in the Supreme. When such a state is attained, even when one is engaged in various worldly activities as any other individual he remains totally unmindful of them.

10

At the mention of the sense objects the crowd of all sense faculties rushes towards them,

11

however, just as the vision, as soon as it comes in contact with the mirror reverts and merges into itself, such becomes the state of rushing faculties.

12

One who buys an ornament having a serpent figure, an ear-ring and a bracelet, having three distinct forms really speaking buys gold only.

Note: According to Marāthi grammar the first is masculine, the second is feminine and the third is neuter gender.

13

When one stretches his hand to collect ripples what is obtained is nothing but water.

14

Anyone can feel its (camphor's) touch with hand, see its form with eyes and taste it with tongue,

15

but the camphor has nothing to boast of except fragrance; in the same way, whatever is pulsating in numerous forms it is that Supreme alone which pulsates.

Note: Cf. verses II.63 and V.4.

16

When the various sense faculties like ears etc. get ready to grab the objects of senses like words etc.,

17

no sooner is their contact established than they realise that those are not their objects and that their contact was false.

18

The pieces of sugarcane are all in the juice (in juice form) like the lustre of (various digits of) the moon is found in the full-moon,

Note: In the case of the liberated soul the objects of enjoyment all stand merged in him. They do not have separate existence.

19

(or) just as the moon-light sheds light on the moon or rains shower on the sea so do the sense organs fall on their objects,

Note: When the sense faculties of the liberated soul meet the sense-objects they become one with the Supreme without the least idea of enjoyment.

20

Therefore, even though the faculty of speech may talk whatever it pleases the silence of the super-conscious state is not disturbed.

Note: In the case of the liberated soul even if he is seen to be talking or doing anything which may seem queer his equipoise is never disturbed because inwardly he is never conscious of what he is doing or saying.

21

While the innumerable transactions of all the senses go on the actionless state does not undergo any disintegration.

22

Just when the seeing faculty by extending its sphere embraces the forms of objects nothing in reality takes place (because the desire of seeing and the forms of object are considered as illusion by one who has gained true knowledge).

23

Were the sun to raise his thousand hands up to pick up darkness he would remain as he is (without getting darkness in his hands).

24

Were one to get up with the fond hope of meeting (experiencing) the pleasures of a dream, he would be himself only.

Note: During the waking state it will be impossible for him to get any dream. Cf. verses VII.75 & 93.

25

When the condition of non-attachment is developed in a person can such a knower remain addicted to the sense objects? In his case both are not going to take place (non-attachment as well as addiction). It cannot be known what actually happens!

26

Were the moon to try to gather moon-light, what could she gather? Likewise is the knower's remembrance of sense objects being barren it will yield nothing.

27

Before this path (of knowledge) the path of Yoga, having practices like restraining senses etc., resorted to by the Yogis looks like a lack-lustre day-time moon.

28

Here (in the state of liberation) active participation in worldly activities comes to an end; non-participation gets prominence; all the experiences take place directly under the observation of the Ātman.

29

In the court-yard of duality monism of its own accord comes to

serve and as the differences widen the unity is doubled (becomes stronger).

Note: In the field of duality such as of God and devotee, the phenomenon of non-duality is predominantly there to serve. In fact there is no duality at all because the God himself is the devotee and nothing is required to be done in the form of worship; whatever takes place, itself assumes the form of worship. In the worship of the liberated soul, he is the God, he is the devotee, he is the worshipping material and the offering is natural. Therefore, as the more fire-wood is put in fire, the fire itself goes on increasing so while duality increases the non-dual state automatically expands.

30

In such a state, the enjoyment of sense objects surpasses even the joy of liberation. In the abode of devotion there is coalescence between the devotee and the God.

31

While walking in the house he becomes a path; whereas while staying in it he remains at his destination only.

Note: Whether walking in the house or sitting in it both activities are in the house only. Just because a person is walking in the house, it does not mean that he wanted to go somewhere else. Similarly when he is sitting in the house that does not mean that he wanted to go elsewhere but has failed to reach the destination because he stayed at home. His walking or sitting has not come in his way of being at the destination because he is at his destination only. Therefore, by walking he has not gained anything or by staying idle at home he has not lost anything whatever he has already secured.

32

In that way, the one (who is liberated) has nothing now to gain by doing anything and nothing to lose whatever he already had by not doing anything.

33

Neither remembering nor forgetting (contra-distinguishing aspects) has got any scope. Such are the unique dealings in this state of liberation).

34

Here self-will is the moral code and unrestrained action is the state of super-consciousness. Such a state has the prestigious throne of liberation to occupy.

Note: This does not mean that a liberated soul behaves as if he has licence to do anything. It only means that he does not behave like a slave of the prevalent moral code of the society which may or may not be beneficial to the society in the long run. Since a liberated soul is always merged in the Supreme his activities happen in a natural way according to the laws of nature and they will always be harmonious. His activities will be confined to natural body requirements and will not create any new imprints. Hence he will be free from any restraints.

35

Here the very God becomes the devotee, the very destination becomes the path and the entire universe becomes one single solitary resort.

36

Here anyone can become God or anyone can become a devotee. The non-doer (who is fully established in the Absolute state), in whatever condition he may be, enjoys like a royal person.

37

Temples have become depleted to accomodate the multitude of Gods; nay, even the streams of time and space have come to a standstill. (The Supreme has covered everything.)

38

Even the God cannot contain his Self in himself. How could then the Goddess have any contact? There would not be any expansion in the family.

39

Were any faith such as God or the devotee to arise in such a state then God alone has to serve the purpose (by playing different roles).

40

There could be no one else in the universe but the God alone in the form of worshipping materials, mantras, meditation and other rituals.

41

Now the God alone should worship God by means of God and make offerings of anything.

42

Look at the grown-up tree. In its expansion (such as trunks, boughs, branches, twigs, foliage, flowers and fruits) there is nothing other than the tree in it.

43

If from one hillock could be carved out the idols of Gods, their temples and their retinue, why could not all the ingredients of devotion be created out of one and the same material.

44

Whether the dumb observes silence or not it is not surprising. In that way, it is the God-state both ways (as God and as his devotee).

45

An image of God prepared from rice was rice only before it was worshipped. Need it then be worshipped by other grains of rice?

46

Even if the flame of a lamp is not asked to clothe itself with light will it remain uncovered?

47

Or were the moon not asked to wear her own light, is she not so clothed already (with light)?

48

Ignition is the intrinsic property of fire; then why the talk of giving or not giving (ignition) to it (fire)?

49

Therefore, it is not that there is devotion only if worship is done and none if worship is not done. It is not so because he (the liberated soul) by nature is Lord Siva only.

50

After extinguishing the lights of action and non-action, devotion and non-devotion sit in the same line for taking meals.

51

Therefore, the Upanishadic declarations are regarded as slanders; and these slanders are considered as elaborate hymns.

Notes: Slander means underrating the qualities of the subject under consideration. The Upanishads have all described the Supreme as 'Not this', 'Not this', i.e. in a negative way. This is considered as slander; on the other hand the Supreme being all pervading, in whatever way he is described it is the singing of his glory.

52

In fact, both slander and praise merge into silence. Therefore, witout saying, it is conveyed that there is Silence in silence.

53

In whatever direction or manner he (the liberated soul) may clumsily walk it becomes pligrimage to Siva; but if he were to go intentionally on Siva's pilgrimage his going would be as not going anywhere.

Note: The liberated soul sees everywhere the Supreme alone. Therefore, whatever and whenever he sees anything, in his vision it is Siva only. He is not required to plan specially for the pilgrimage. He will also not get any special merit by visiting Siva's temple. Hence his pilgrimage would be of no consequence.

54

Both walking and sitting amount to one and the same thing in his state. Is it not a wonder?

55

Whatever he happens to see at any time, in that object he gets a festive vision of Siva.

56

Or though the God Siva may be seen in the front it is as if nothing has been seen; the God and the devotee have one status only.

57

A ball starts moving on its own, strikes itself and thereby gaining momentum rebounds within itself.

58

If one has witnessed such a game of ball at any time, he would be able to recount the simple life of the enlightened soul.

59

This is the natural way of devotion (of the enlightened one). Neither action has any hand in it nor has the knowledge any entry here.

60

It (such devotion) is neither created nor destroyed. It is self-generated. Can such happiness be compared to any other happiness?

61

This is the secret of the unique and simple devotion. This is the retiring place of Yoga, knowledge etc.

62

Hari and Hara (Lords Vishnu and Siva) were indeed one in body but had different labels of names and forms (for the purpose of worship); those also got dissolved.

Note: Distinction between God and devotee, preceptor and disciple and Nivrittinātha and Jnānadeva was never there. The Supreme alone exists which also needs no counting as it is without a second. This was the original state. However, due to illusions, innumerable specimens of dual forms and shapes are found in reality but in the state of liberation all of them entirely melt and become one with the Supreme. This is the state of the Siddhās where Lords Vishnu and Siva, Prakriti and Purusha, Siva and Sakti and originating therefrom such dyads as God and devotee, man and woman and preceptor and disciple all get dissolved into that Supreme.

63

(Both Siva and Sakti) Ardhanārinateshwar (having half female and half male body) devouring each other simultaneously and totally got eclipsed.

64

(Here) Parā having devoured all that could be uttered and having drunk the other three modes of speech went to sleep alone.

65

Oh, Blissful and worthy Siva! of such a vast land of bliss, you have made us the enjoyers and dispensers both.

66

Oh! you have awakened the already awake, lulled to sleep the one already asleep and brought to us ourselves. What a wonder of yours!

67

We are entirely yours; and over and above that out of affection you call us your own. Such repetition befits you only.

68

You do not take anything from anybody; likewise you do not give anything that is yours. Who knows how you enjoy this wonderful greatness of yours!

Notes: Such spiritual teachers who render selfless service are very rare to come across when the spiritual knowledge in modern times has been entirely commercialised. The real teacher renders service entirely out of love and affection. He does not demand anything not even by way of gift or donation either in cash or kind. On the other hand he does not give anything to the disciple. He makes the disciple realise what he is and that is the end of the spiritual practice. (Cf. verses 55 & 61 of Chapter II.) Besides, the spiritual guide and the disciple being one and the same there is no scope for give and take transactions between the two.

69

You are as great a benefactor as you are a small saviour. (*Being a*

great scholar you are good in imparting knowledge and being small or light in weight you rescue and bring to the shore of liberation those who are drowning in the worldly sea.) These qualities of yours, of being great and small are known to them only who take refuge in you.

Note: Cf. verse II.21.

70

Oh! were your monistic equipoise such as would get cracks by sharing it with your disciples, how (and why) would the scriptures have become bards (singing your praise)!

71

You have become our kith and kin by destroying the mundane relationship arising from 'I and you'—thus you are mightily pleased.

Note: Cf. verse II.64.

CHAPTER X

ग्रंथपरिहार

Clarification about the Work

1

Oh Lord Nivrittinātha! You blessed me with Supreme happiness. Should I not have enjoyed that bliss in solitude!

2

But the Supreme God placed in the hands of the sun the secret of light with which he has illumined the entire universe.

Note: Cf. verse II.44.

3

The moon was given nectar; but was it meant for her only? Or did the ocean give (its water in the form of vapours) to the clouds for their use alone?

4

The light of a lamp is for the entire house or the expansion of the sky space is for the entire universe.

5

Is it not through the power of the moon that the ocean overflows with tides? Is it not due to the spring that the trees become charitable (offering flowers and fruits)?

6

Therefore, all this unbounded (bliss) is the (outcome of the) generosity of the Divine Master. My exposition is not thus independent (of the Master's grace).

7

And why should I give all this elaborate clarification coming in the way of the full display of the glory of the master?

Note: His glory is infinite but by stating that his grace is responsible for this composition it would be belittling the Master's eminence.

(*Alternative reading of verse 7*)

Taking shelter of the display of the glory of the Master why should I give this elaborate clarification (about my work)?

Note: In saying that it is all my Master's glory and there is no originality of mine, it is not my intention to attract publicity and gain recognition for my work, trading in the name of my Master.

8

Whatever we have spoken is apparent by itself. Does the self-illumined (Supreme) need words to enlighten it?

9

Or had we assumed silence would not have people seen people (i.e. would they have stopped seeing each other)?

10

When people see each other in reality the seers themselves become the objects of seeing. It is so evident a principle that nobody is required to do anything (to prove it).

11

There is no other mystery about the Pure Consciousness than this. It has already been there even before it was enunciated.

12

If all this leads to say that there was no need for composing this work, (the answer is:) we have only repeated what was self-evident, out of liking (of the subject).

13

A thing of one's liking is ever the same; yet it gives a new taste every time it is enjoyed. Therefore, our repeating the established truth is justified.

14

Therefore, it is not that I have divulged any secret. It is self-illumined.

15

And we are completely surrounded by Self (i.e. the state of feeling that I am Brahman). We have pervaded everything (feeling that all this universe is indeed Brahman only). We have neither hidden ourselves from nor revealed ourselves to anybody.

Note: Cf. verse VIII.3.

16

What sermon can one offer to self? And what is one going to lose by keeping quiet?

17

Therefore, my Vaikhari (the gross form of speech) has assumed silence even in regard to silence, which is like drawing the picture of a fish on the surface of water.

Note: So whatever bunch of words I have used in narrating this experience has given up its form, nay, the corresponding opposite silence has also given up its silence and both of them got merged in the ambrosial experience. When one starts drawing a picture of a fish on the surface of water with a small stick, as and when he draws one stroke to indicate its limb simultaneously it disappears in water; likewise, as soon as the words take form in the narration of my experience they get deleted and merge into the experience itself.

18

Thus even the ten Upanishadās have not advanced any step further (beyond what has already been said about the Supreme). Seeing that, the knowledge also drowned itself here.

Note: The following are the ten Upanishads—Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Mundaka, Māndukya, Taittiriya, Aaitareya, Chandogya and Brihadāranyaka.

19

Jnānadev says that those who are rich (in spiritual wealth) will become liberated in this life by drinking the nectar of experience (of the Supreme state).

20

The state of liberation is very charming indeed. But the nectar of experience (of the Supreme state) is so unique that the state of liberation starts secreting saliva (indicating intense desire) to taste the state of the Supreme

Note: According to the Siddha path the state of liberation is far below the final state known as Paramapada or Amritkalā.

21

Every night the moon rises; but on a full-moon day she is different. But can I say this from the viewpoint of the sun?

Note: On the full-moon day the lustre of the moon is brighter than its lustre on any other day; similarly the state of liberation is very attractive and covetable from the point of a novice in the spiritual field. But from the point of view of the one who has attained the Paramapada the state of liberation is not of much importance.

22

The youthful state exists in a natural way in a young lady. But when it comes in contact with the beloved it blossoms out.

23

The trees get laden with fruits and flowers on the advent of the spring and swing to and fro with branches rising up in the sky.

Note: Cf. verse X.5.

24

It is for this reason, that my own experience which is put in the words as 'Anubhavāmrit' is served as a delicious food.

25

And distinction such as, one liberated, one having desire to get liberated and the one remaining in bondage according to their spiritual development remains so long as the flavour of the nectar of experience is not tasted by them.

26

The waters (streams) going to take a dip in the Gangā become the Gangā or darkness meeting the sun (becomes the sun).

Note: Cf. verses VII.31 & 33. The same thought is expressed while talking about ignorance.

27

All talk about the different degrees of the purity of metal is only till it has not undergone transmutation by Parisa (a philosophers' stone which has the property of turning a base metal into pure gold). Thereafter it cannot be ranked below fifteen standard units.

Note: In earlier days the highest purity of gold was measured in terms of sixteen units and the gold coming up to the test of fifteen units was considered as pure. The metal which has come in contact with 'Parisa' is finer than the so-called pure gold of fifteen units.

28

In that way, those that meet the core of these words (i.e. who are able to understand the deeper meaning) are like the streams merging into the ocean.

Note: Likewise, whosoever, whether he be liberated, or desirous of liberation or one in bondage, enters the sanctum sanctorum of the words of this work, will get merged into the Supreme state just as various streams of water, big or small, get merged in the sea. Entering the core of the words means understanding not the superficial meaning but the inner meaning of this work. When this is done then all the base metals in the form of various grades of spiritual students turn into pure gold of the Supreme as explained in the earlier verse.

29

Just as the fifty letters (*in Devanāgari script the total number of letters is fifty*) converge into the syllable beginning with 'a' (i.e. Om); in that way, the entire universe of moveables and immoveables is nothing else (but the all pervading Supreme).

Note: Just as the fifty letters originated and dissolved into the original word 'OM' and as such they have no other go but to stay with 'OM' peacefully and amicably, so the entire universe of animate and inanimate objects rises and disappears into that Supreme. Knowing this fact full well, one should live in harmony with this law of nature.

30

In that way (when one starts taking stock of things by finger counts) after counting the God, another finger is not required (to count). Nay, everything is pervaded by Siva only.

Note: Compare this verse with verses I.31 and V.34.

31

'Therefore', exhorts Jnanadeva, 'may the whole world celebrate the festival by having the nectar of experience!'

Note: This festival relates to having the experience of the highest spiritual state known as Paramapada. In one of his devotional songs Jnānadeva had proclaimed 'I will make the entire world happy and fill the three worlds with bliss'. It is to fulfil this promise that the present work has been composed. It is to be noted that this nectarean experience is not available only to any particular class of people. It is available to one and all, irrespective of creed, colour, sex, status or region. Hence it has the universal appeal. Therefore by way of benediction Jnānadeva wishes that all the people in the world should partake of the bliss and celebrate the festival.

LIFE OF NATURAL BLISS

An English translation of Jnānadeva's

Chāngadeva Pāsashti

Introduction

It is a small monograph of sixty five verses having the legend "Chāngadeva Pāsashti", written as a reply to the Chāngadeva's blank epistle. In Marāthi "Pāsashti" means sixty-five.

Chāngadeva was a great Siddha who lived for more than 1400 years, on the banks of the Tāpi river. His preceptor was Vateshwar and from him he acquired a great many mystic powers and he succeeded him as Vateshwar. Although he was very learned, he was unable to make much advance in spiritual matters. Having heard about Jnānadeva's fame and glory as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, he once visited Ālandi to meet Jnānadeva. He arrived at Ālandi with a great fanfare carrying large retinue and regalia; he himself was mounted on a tiger and carried a live serpent as a whip to control the carrier. Jnānadeva, his sister and two brothers were sitting on the parapet basking in the sun. Having come to know that a great Siddha had come to their place, Jnānadeva desired to pay his respects and welcome the guest. He therefore ordered the insentient wall to move in the direction of Chāngadeva and lo and behold! it moved and in no time the whole company of Jnānadeva stood face to face with Chāngadeva. The latter was bewildered with this miracle; his bloated ego got pricked and instantly he fell prostrate at the feet of Jnānadeva realising his greatness. He felt that Jnānadeva would be a worthy preceptor to take guidance from in spiritual matters; so in order to solicit his favour Chāngadeva thought of writing to Jnānadeva, but he was in a dilemma as to how to address him and express his desire to seek audience. In his utterly confounded state, he simply sent a blank paper to Jnānadeva. When it was seen, it aroused interesting feed-backs from Nivrittinātha, Jnānadeva and sister Muktābai. Nivrittinātha understood the sorry plight of Chāngadeva and asked Jnānadeva to help him. Muktābāi, who was hardly thirteen, expressed her wonder by saying, 'Oh! Having spent fourteen hundred years in doing penance, the old man is still blank!' Jnānadeva went into a semi-transcendental state and wrote sixty-five verses to brief Chāngadeva; the composition is known as *Chāngadeva Pāsashti*. It deals with the topic of the "Life of Natural Bliss" (*svānanda jīvan*); hence it is also referred to as "Swānanda Jiwan".

The three works of Jnānadeva, *Bhāvārthadipikā*, *Amritānubhava* and *Chāngadeva Pāsashti* are known as "triads of salvation" (*prasthānatrayī*) and are held in high esteem and as sacred as the holy confluence of the three rivers Gangā, Jamunā and Saraswati. *Chāngadeva Pāsashti* is in a way a quintessence of *Amritānubhava* and can be appreciated better after one reads *Amritānubhava*. As Jnānadeva himself says, *Chāngadeva Pāsashti* is a tasty sweetmeat of self-experience offered out of affection of the mother-like Shri Nivrittināthа (verse 61).

Chāngadeva Pāsashti opens with blessings to Chāngadeva, thus giving an assurance and great relief to him. Verses 1 to 36 deal with the creation of the world emphasizing that there are no dualities or trinities as wrongly experienced due to ignorance, but there is only one solid substratum (the Supreme Spirit) which takes myriad forms and shapes and enjoys itself. It is known by various names as the Truth, the Pure Consciousness or the Natural Bliss. From verses 37 to 53 the futility of meeting and conversation is explained by various illustrations. According to Jnānadeva, their meeting was for ever self-accomplished because there exist not two separate entities as Jnānadeva and Chāngadeva, both being one Supreme Ātman only (verse 50). However, the dialogue, which was in unspoken words and which contained the enunciation of basic unprovable truths, was penned down to re-live the joy of the so-called meeting (verses 53 & 55). Verses 55 to 60 contain a key-note advice to Chāngadeva on how to attain the transcendental state of Natural Bliss. What is most important is that though these are instructions meant for Chāngadeva only, Jnānadeva has assured everyone the same transcendental state, provided he strictly leads a life according to the guidelines given here (verse 63). These guidelines are great revelations which Jnānadeva himself intuitively comprehended in an ecstatic state (verse 65).

The legend goes further. Chāngadeva did contemplate over these verses but he lacked experiential validation. Still doubts lingered on in his mind. It was Muktābāi who cleared all his doubts and uprooted his imprints of actions and ego. Chāngadeva composed some verses (*abhanga*) describing in detail the discussions which he had with Muktābāi and narrating with what motherly care he was shaped by Muktābāi leading him watchfully step by step to the kingdom of Natural Bliss.

Life of Natural Bliss
(*Chāngadeva Pāsashti*)

1. Srivateshu, (Chāngadeva's title) be blessed! (The Supreme Spirit) by hiding itself creates the appearance of the world. Then by absorbing it (in Self) reveals (itself).

2. As it goes on revealing, it is not to be seen. The more it tries to hide, the more apparent it becomes. It neither reveals nor hides. It is not lacking in anything.

3. The more it expands, the more it tends to be non-existent. Without anything happening to it, it remains as it is by itself.

4. Just as without losing golden quality, gold gets transformed into ornaments, likewise, (the Supreme Spirit) without any loss becomes the world.

5. Just as water lays bare without taking off the garment of ripples, its natural form is visible in entirety with (the garment of) the world (on its body).

6. As in the heap of dust particles, their earthy quality is not lost, so too, in the vibrating world of objects it (the Supreme Spirit) does not get covered up.

7. The moon is not concealed by the veils of digits or fire does not become different because it serves the purpose of a lamp.

8. The objects and the phenomenon of seeing persist because of ignorance. I (the Supreme Spirit) am not aware of them. I am as I am self-evident.

9. For the sake of nomenclature, what is known as a *sari* (a woman's garment) is obviously only thread; or the earthen pot is only clay.

10. It (the Supreme Spirit) is merely a seeing phenomenon which arises on account of the seer and the object of seeing but it transcends the state of the seer and the seen.

11. All the ornaments though called by various names are gold in totality, or as the various limbs of the body though mistaken to be separate belong to one body only.

12. In the same way, all the elements right from Siva to earth which appear as different substances, shine alike with the same Pure Consciousness.

13. Paintings depict all sorts of pictures but behind them it is wall alone (on which pictures are drawn). So, in the form of universe the Pure Consciousness shines.

14. Just as sweetness of jaggery is not affected because the lump of jaggery is broken into pieces, likewise understand the Pure Consciousness though it takes myraid forms in the world.

15. As a piece of cloth is recognised as cloth in whatever shape it slumps, so it is the vibrant Pure Consciousness only even if it pulsates in the form of various objects of the world.

16. Without being tainted by happiness or sorrow, it spontaneously bestirs itself and by assuming various forms of objects appears before itself (as objects of seeing).

17. That is called the existence of the objects. They cause the Pure Consciousness to become the seer as the object causes reflection (in the mirror).

18. That way, it (the Supreme Spirit) goes on showing itself in the form of various objects created out of self to self only, thereby parading the trinity of the seer, seeing and the seen.

19. Just as in a ball of thread there is nothing else within or without, likewise is this trinity without the threefold distinction.

20. Seeing only one's own face in the mirror, one feels that the seeing was futile;

21. that way, the Pure Consciousness without undergoing any change appears threefold. Know this well-known principle (regarding the creation of the universe).

22. The massive edifice of the objects of seeing itself becomes the seer of the world. The seeing faculty becomes disabled to see the distinction between the two.

23. When there is no object of seeing, what is it that the faculty of seeing is going to see? Can there be a seer without the object of seeing?

24. Therefore, when the object of seeing exists, the seer takes to seeing; but when what is in the front (i.e. the object of seeing) disappears, then the two (the seer and seeing) also likewise disappear.

25. In this manner, the one only (Pure Consciousness) becomes triad; when all the three disappear, one entity remains. However, all

the three are imaginary; one alone is real.

26. Before or after looking into the mirror, the face remains in its own place. Does anything else happen by looking into the mirror?

27. Because the object (of seeing) is in the front, the seer feels that he is seeing. But the seeing is an empty fraud.

28. Therefore, in the course of seeing the object, the Supreme Spirit, which is different from the seer and the seen, sees only itself.

29. The self-evident Supreme Spirit abides in itself by absorbing all distinct qualities just as the sound is without (distinct sounds created by) the whole array of musical instruments, or the fire is without (different varieties of fire created by) different types of fire-wood.

30. It (the Supreme Spirit) cannot be expressed; it cannot be comprehended by any means; you see that it is. It exists (not as existence vis-a-vis non-existence) per se.

31. The eyes which can see (anything) are incapable of seeing themselves; likewise, the one who is knowledge incarnate is feeble to know his own self.

32. It is a knowing principle; there is absolutely no unknowing. Even if called as knowledge, how can it be known?

33. Therefore, it can be expressed by observing silence. Though nothing happens, everything takes place; it is found though non-existent; there is nothing whatsoever.

34. Just as in different garlands of waves water only exists, so in different interlinked branches of knowledge, there is only (Pure Consciousness) Truth.

35. It is a mere phenomenon of seeing without the object of seeing (i.e. its abiding does not depend upon the object of seeing). It is alone (independent) by itself.

36. It exists when nothing else exists; it sees when nothing exists; it enjoys when nothing exists. It is mere Self.

37. O Chāngayā! You are the son of that Vateshwar (here the reference is to the former preceptor of Chāngadeva) like pure camphor. So hear about it, (the Supreme Spirit) which is the topic of our discussion.

38. Jnānadeva says, your listening to my talk is like the palm of a hand clasping the (same) palm.

39. As speech hearing speech, taste tasting the taste or the illuminator seeing the light,

40. as gold having the coating of gold or face becoming a mirror for face, O Chakrapāni (another name of Chāngadeva), our conversation is similar to that.

41. When sweetness tastes its own sweetness, will it not be inclosed in the mouth? Our mutual affection is comparable to it.

42. O my bosom friend, I am dying to meet you; however, I am afraid that the already self-accomplished meeting may get crumpled.

43. Just when I try to see you, my mind takes your form. In such a condition, seeing you seems to be beyond (my) efforts.

44. Whatever you do, speak or think or whatever you don't do, speak or think, there is no awareness of both (actions and inactions) in your own self.

45. O Chāngayā, to do something or not to do anything for you, neither does it happen. How to tell you! I am unable to hold on to myself.

46. When salt enters water to measure its depth, it does not survive; then who is to measure water!

47. Thus, when I try to see your Ātman, I don't survive; then who will be there to imagine how you look like?

48. One who tries to see sleep in a waking condition loses the vision (of sleep), so when I try to see you, I remain without gaining anything (seeing you).

49. Whereas, there is no sun-light in darkness, still (for the one who is standing in that darkness) the knowledge that I am is not lost.

50. That way, when I try to capture you, 'You-ness' entirely gets eclipsed by 'my-ness' and only our meeting survives.

51. In the role of a seer, the eye steadfastly sees the picture created for fun from its own sight,

52. Similarly, when the topic (of our meeting) comes up, without any difference in vision our meeting materialises, devoid of 'you and I' awareness.

53. Now, overcoming the appellations of you and I, the meeting alone is enjoyed over and again by narrating it.

54. Just as a tasty preparation is a taster itself, enjoys the meals of that very tasty preparation or as the seer sees himself by becoming a mirror (i.e. the thing of enjoyment itself becoming the enjoyer),

55. in that way, by incorporating such principles which are unprovable by any modes of proof and putting together such words

which silence alone can understand, the story of our meeting is composed.

56. Making this (meeting) as an excuse, try to know thyself as a lamp knows itself by its own light.

57. This discourse is thus meant to open a new vision; one can meet oneself within oneself.

58. At the time of the deluge, the flood of infinite water rushes forth and swallows its own source, do accordingly.

59. Jnānadeva says, "Your true existence has neither name nor form; it is by itself. It is the life of Natural Bliss.

60. O Chāngayā! More and more treasure of knowledge will come to your door and you will come to occupy the seat which is beyond the knower and the knowledge.

61. O Chāngadeva! Making you as an excuse, the mother-like Shri Nivrittinātha out of affection for you has made me offer this sweet-dish of experience."

62. In this way, when Jnānadeva and Chakrapāni like two seeing mirrors saw each other they lost their distinction.

63. In that manner, the one who will look into the mirror of these verses (i.e. reflect on the meaning of these verses) will gain happiness comparable to the Supreme Ātman.

64. That which does not exist exists, but what it is, is not known. That which is seen is not visualised how it looks. That which exists is unknown to itself. How does this happen!

65. Jnānadeva says that it is like the interweaving of the sleeping state which transcends the ordinary sleep and the waking state which swallows the natural waking state.

Glossary

Advaita—Non-dual; the philosophy of Monism holding that the primordial substance is only one and that all the manifestations originate from that substance only.

Agasti—A sage who had occult powers; he was requested by the assembly of Gods headed by Indra to dry up the ocean to enable them to kill their enemy-king, Kāleya. The sage quaffed off the entire ocean in one sip.

Ajnāna—Ignorance; in the context of this work it is ignorance of ignorance—a non-existent substance.

Ambaratva—Capacity of holding sound i.e. sky.

Ambikā—Name of Sakti; a fair complexioned Goddess.

Amrit—Ambrosia; nectar of immortality; beverage of Gods.

Ānava—A veil of impurity in the form of ignorance of Truth. It also denotes a technique explained in Siva-sutra to remove this veil.

Anubhava—Experience; intuitional perception in the realm of Nature or God.

Ardhanārinateshwara—A figure of Siva, right half male and left half female. Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe first created a species which was immortal but there was no increase or decrease in their number. He wanted to create a species of mortals but he was not successful. He therefore did great penance to please Lord Siva. Siva appeared before him in the form of a conjoined male and female figure. From this model Brahmā created the mortal world of human beings.

Bandha—Bondage by the fetters of existence or of evil, sin, experience, past imprints, etc.

Bhavāni—Consort of Siva; the power that created the universe.

Bhūtesha—The Lord of all manifest and unmanifest elements.

Chakor—A kind of bird; the Greek partridge, said to feed on moonbeams.

Chafa—A yellow fragrant flower. Serpents get attracted to its trees because of the soothing fragrance of the flowers.

Chinmatra—Pure Existence alone.

Deva—Name of Siva.

Devi—Name of Sakti.

Dvaita—A school of philosophy which believes in the existence of two primeval substances—Purusha and Prakriti—which are the efficient and material causes of the universe.

Gandharvanagari—An imaginary city in the sky conjured up by imagination which gives a form and shape of a city to some natural phenomenon like a cluster of clouds.

Ghee of tortoise—An imaginary substance because tortoise does not give milk.

Govadha—Cow-slaughter; killing of

knowledge i.e. ignorance.

Hari—Name of Lord Vishnu.

Hara—Name of Lord Shiva.

Horns of hare—An imaginary thing.

Jivanmukta—One who is liberated in life.

Jnāna—Pure knowledge; in common parlance it is the sum total of individual experiences in life.

Jnānadeva—Supposed to be the incarnation of Lord Vishnu; born in A.D. 1275; parents, Vithalpant and Rukminibai. Literary works — *Bhāvārthadipikā, Amritānubhava, Chāngadeva Pāsashti, Abhangagāthā*; *Samādhi* in A.D. 1296.

Kaivalya—The final emancipation or beatitude.

Kālikā—Name of Sakti; the Goddess of dark complexion having a fierce appearance.

Kalpānta—End of the 'kalpa' (a day), when the entire universe gets flooded with water. It occurs at the end of a day of Lord Brahmā which is equal to 1000 Yugas—a period of 432 million years of mortals.

Kanchuka—Covering of impurity; a garment worn tightly round the upper part of the body; fraction of total knowledge.

Karma—Imprints of actions.

Khapushpa—Sky flower, an imaginary object.

Madhyamā—A kind of sound produced by air united with the understanding and endowed with special motion.

Mahāpralaya—A deluge which takes place after 100 years of Lord Brahmā.

Mahāvākyas—Important declarations of Upanishads, e.g.: (i) All this is indeed Brahman; (ii) This Ātman is Brahman; (iii) That thou art; (iv) I am Brahman; and (v) Pure Knowledge is Brahman.

Malaya—Name of a mountain range in the south of India abounding in sandal trees. Wind coming from it is considered to be very soothing to lovers.

Māyā—It is unreality. The illusion by virtue of which one considers the universe as really existent and as distinct from the Supreme.

Meru—Name of a fabulous mountain round which planets are said to revolve. It is made of gold.

Moksha—Final emancipation; deliverance of the soul from recurring birth and trans-migration. Freedom from bondage.

Mukta—Emancipated soul. One who is free from all bondages.

Mumukshu—One who is desirous of liberation.

Nivritti—Abstention; engaging oneself in activities which lead to spiritual progress and ultimately to liberation; a state of involution in which one gets dissolved into the original state. A continuous transcendental state unaffected by internal or external happenings.

Nivrittinātha—The celebrated preceptor and elder brother of Jnānadeva.

Om—The first sound—creation when there was a stir in the energy principle. The three letters constituting this word (a, u, m; a + u = o) represent trinities such as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. It is a sacred syllable symbolising Brah-

man and is also known as Pranava.

Ovi—A type of metrical composition having four lines with alliterations of end letters of first three lines, each line containing letters ranging between five and fifteen and the fourth line has less number of letters. In Marāthi literature, Jnānadeva's composition in this metre is well known.

Panchākshari—An exorcist who is well versed in five types of Mantrās chanting which results in committing adultery, destruction, seduction, obstruction and subjugation by a person on whose behalf the Mantrās are chanted. He is also supposed to drive out evil spirits and cure persons possessed by them.

Pātāla—The last of the seven regions of the world under the earth.

Parā—The subtlest sound produced by air rising in the Mūlādhāra.

Parisa—A philosophers' stone which turns base metals into pure gold.

Pashyanti—A form of sound produced by air united with Manas and possessing the nature of the manifested Kārya Bindu.

Prakriti—The original source of the material world consisting of three essential qualities—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Also the personified will of the Supreme Ātman in the creation. Also known as Nature.

Pralaya—A great overflow of water at the end of one Kalpa i.e. a day of Brahmā.

Pranava—The sacred symbol 'Om' from which the entire universe originated and into which ultimately it will get dissolved.

Pratyāhara—The fifth of the eight steps of Raja Yoga. It refers to a practice of withdrawing the outward projection of sense-faculties and merging it into mind.

Pravritti—Life style of enaging oneself in activities which lead to mundane pleasures; a process of natural evolution from the primordial state.

Purusha—The Supreme Being; the efficient cause of the universe.

Rajas—One ingredient of human personality that stimulates emotions like anger, passion etc., not easily controlled.

Rambhāgarbha—The core of a plantain tree, it has a special significance in Siddha philosophy.

Sadāshiva—The first incipient stage of dualism. The first emanation of consciousness.

Sadguru—A spiritual guide or preceptor.

Sahasrārjuna—The eldest son of Kritavirya. He worshipped Lord Dattātreya and obtained four boons from him. One of them was that he would be as powerful as one with thousand hands. Hence he is known as one who has thousand hands. He ruled over the region 'Mahishmati' for several years. However, since he incurred the wrath of the Brahmins, he was killed in the battle by Parashurāma, the son of Jāmadagni.

Sakti—Consort of Siva; kinetic, active aspect of consciousness. According to its functioning, it is given various names as Nijāsakti,

Parāsakti, Aparāsakti, Sukshmāsakti and Kundalinisakti.

Samāveshana—Process of entering and merging completely into another substance. It has a special significance in the Siddha philosophy.

Sāmbhavi—The state of Siva-hood.

Sambhu—Name of Siva.

Samsāra—The course or circuit of worldly life; mundane existence, the process of continuous evolution of the world.

Sattva—Quality of goodness and purity.

Saundaryalahari—'Waves of beauty', a hymn written in praise of Sakti, full of esoteric meaning, ascribed to Sankarācharya.

Shabda—The manifestation of sound energy in word form.

Siddhānuvāda—Faithful rendering of Siddha philosophy or narration of what is self-established.

Siddha philosophy—The philosophy propounded by Ādi Nātha known as 'Nātha Sampradaya'; it is more or less the same as Sivādvaita. It believes that the Supreme, Siva-Sakti and the universe are all one and the same.

Siva—Auspicious or propitious. The primordial substance known by various names such as the Absolute, Supreme, Paramātman, Brahman, Ātman, Reality, Pure Knowledge, Truth etc.

Siva-sutra—Also known as Kāshmir sutra. It is composed by Achārya Vasugupta through the inspiration of Lord Siva. It deals with Sivādvaita philosophy.

Tamas—One of the natural qualities of human beings which stimulates indolence, laziness and prompts actions through ignorance; Darkness.

Tanmātrās—They are five in number. They are subtle forms of sound, pressure, light, taste and smell.

Tantrāloka — Encyclopaedic treatise on Tantra. Also known as Kāshmir sutra.

Tattvās—The primary elements constituting the universe. They are thirty-six in number from Siva to earth.

Yoga—Hindu system of meditation and practices of self-control intended to produce mystical experience and the union of the individual soul with the Supreme.

Yogabhumikā—Various stages of spiritual development attained by practising Yoga. They are seven in number. The last stage is kn[illegible] as a transcendental stage (*unm*[illegible]

Upanishad—Certain mystic[illegible] attached to the Brāhm[illegible] part of the Vedās—the [illegible] which was to ascertain the secret meaning of the Vedās. They are the collections of thoughts of several sages when they were contemplating in a transcendental state on the nature of the universe. The ten are considered to be most important out of all the Upanishads. It also means getting close to the truth.

Vaikhari—The gross form of sound. It is also called 'Bhārati'.

Vaikuntha—The heavenly abode of Lord Vishnu.

Vastu—The basic substance from which the entire universe is born.

Vishrāma Bhumikā—Resting resorts

on the spiritual paths. According to Siddha philosophy there are several resorts like Chitta, Chitvilol, Sākta, Vaishnava, Upadesha and Nijavishranti.

Vritti—Function, operation, being in a particular state, subtle stimuli coming up in the mind causing action.

